FORWARD

When it comes to drawing manga, the works of Sanbei Shirato rival Osamu Tezuka in their influence on me. The world of ninja Shirato drew, with its sharp movement and overwhelming intensity, charmed me.

It's already been 27 years since I began drawing "Black Lion". In other words, it was a work I drew before my professional debut. Soaked in the manga of Sanpei Shirato and the novels of Fuutarou Yamada, I thought that if I drew my own ninja manga, it should include science fiction elements as well.

At that time I had quit attending prep school for university entrance exams and was aiming to become a professional manga author, so that I could draw the manga I wanted to draw without anyone complaining. "Black Lion" is what I produced by doing that. It turned out to be an 818 page epic and I tried bringing it to publishers, but I couldn't get it accepted. Because, in the manga anthologies at that time, even the long stories were only 16 pages an issue, there was no way anyone would take 818 pages from a new author.

It finally saw the light of day in 1978 in "Weekly Shonen Magazine".
Of course, although I had to redraw it from scratch, the concept was the same.
The only difference was that I had deadlines.

History is fascinating material for a science fiction author.
Everyone is certainly tempted to use it as a theme once or twice.
Moreover, with ninjas, who hid themselves in the shadows, one is free to do anything.
I took the warring states period, the most chaotic time in Japan's history, as my stage and threw in everything I wanted to do. However, I don't remember valuing it very much.

I was surprised two years later when I went to see "Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back", which had received such high advance reviews. In that film there is a scene in which Luke Skywalker gets his hand cut off and has it replaced with an artificial one aboard a spaceship. Shishimaru Tenou does the same thing in "Black Lion". Now that I think about it, there are similarities to "Black Lion" throughout all three "Star Wars" films.
It can't be explained away as just my own imagination.

Besides that, I've seen the obstinate cyborg Arnold Schwarzenegger played in Cameron's "Terminator" somewhere before. That's right, isn't it just like the scene in which Jinai Douma keeps getting up and chasing after Shishimaru, no matter how often he's killed?

Without my knowing it, parts of "Black Lion" found there way into other standalone works and became fantastic scenes. Both of them were record breaking hits and both of them are among my favorite movies.

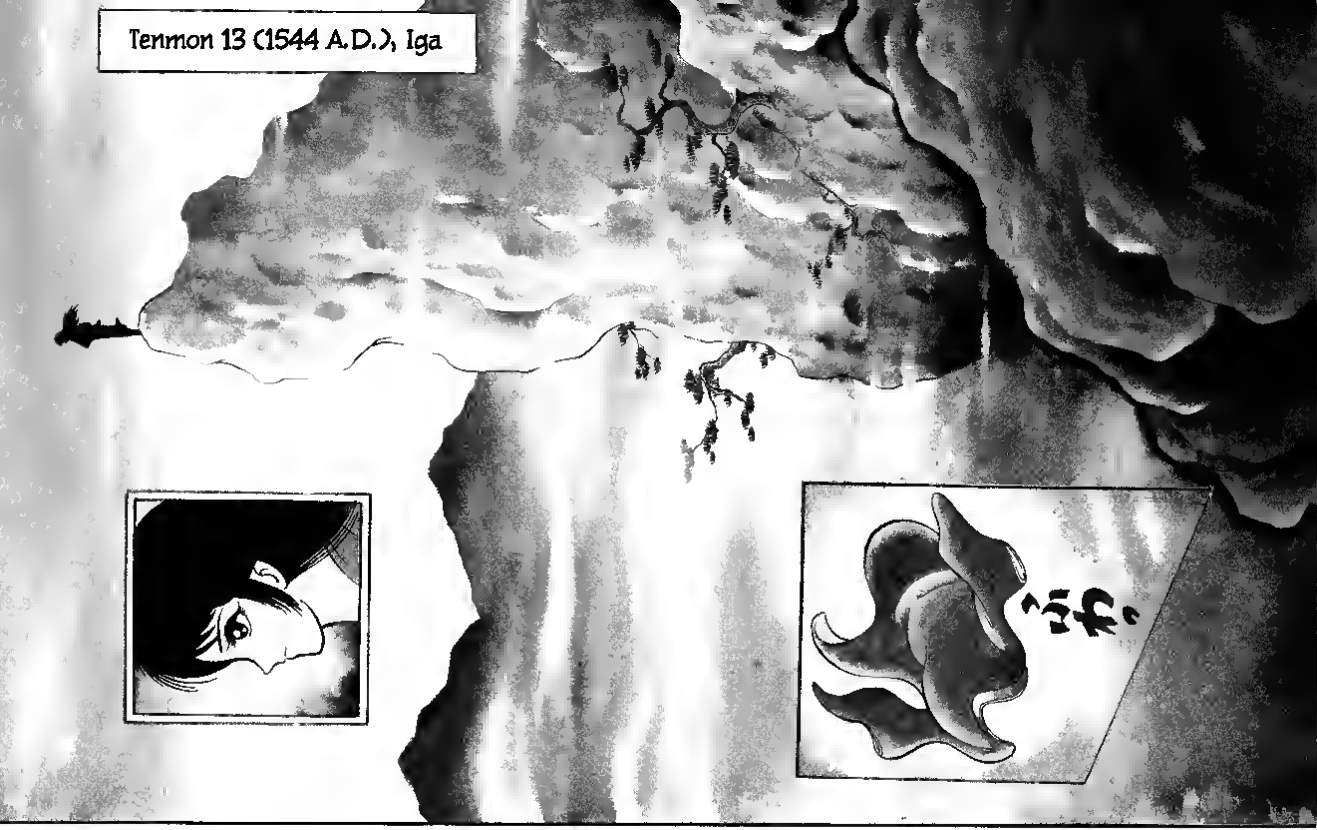
As an author, there can be no greater joy than this

December, 1991
Go Nagai

20,000 B.C.
STOP THIS!! NO ONE CAN WIN AGAINST THE BEAST-GODS!
NO!!
IT'S THEM! THE BEAST-GODS!
I WILL TAKE REVENGE FOR THE MURDER OF MY TRIBE!
THEY'RE NEARBY!

LET'S GO! BEAST-GOD!!

Black Lion


Tenmon 13 (1544 A.D.), Iga

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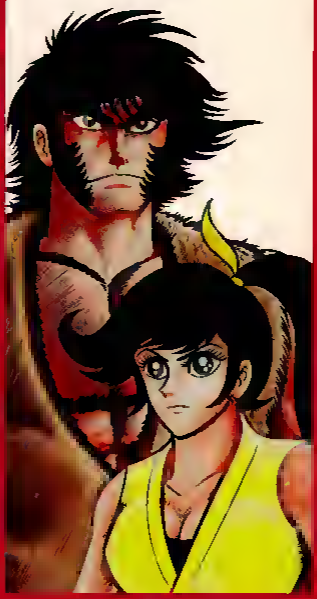

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カバー・レイアウト　丸山邦彦
(CREATIVE MIND)

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MU HO HO HO

BUT, SHE'S GOTTEN BEAUTIFUL, HASN'T SHE ?
Y.. YES

I ALWAYS THOUGHT OF HER AS A CHILD, BUT BEFORE I KNEW IT...
MU HO HO HO

OLD MAN, YOU MUST BE GETTING OLD NOT TO NOTICE ME BESIDE YOU...
HA!
OH, CHIEF, IT'S YOU.
MU HO HO HO, I'VE ALREADY GIVEN UP BEING A SHINOBI

THAT CLEVER-NESS, THAT STRENGTH,
THAT AGILITY,

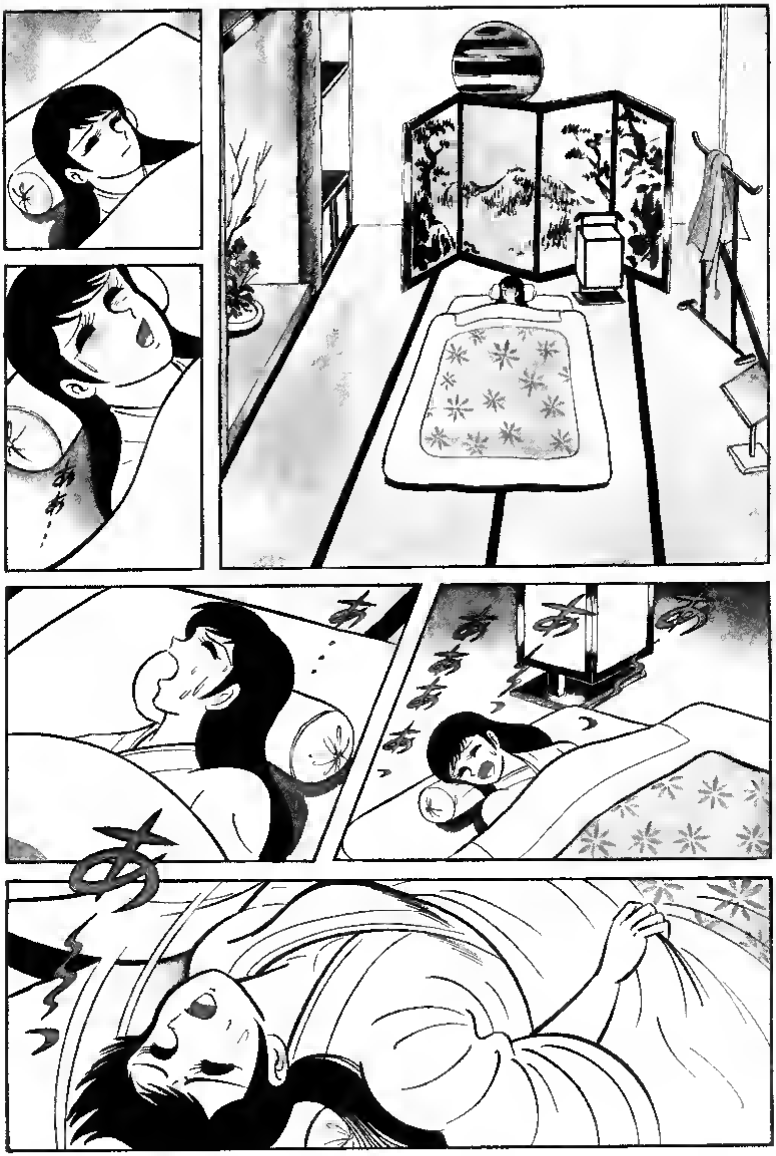
BUT HER BLOOD IS UNMISTAK-ABLE

SHE DOESN'T WANT TO BECOME A SHINOBI...
HOW-EVER,
AS EXPECTED FROM THE MOMOCHI FAMILY, LEADERS OF THE IGA SHINOBI. SHE'S NO ORDINARY PERSON.
THAT FIERCE TEMPERAMENT IS TOO MUCH FOR AN OLD MAN TO HANDLE...
ドドド

ヒヒーン
ワアー
ワワワ
ヒヒーン
あ
オオッ

The warring states period... After the Onin war, the nation was in chaos. Warring Daimyou seeking to rule the land by force appeared one after another...

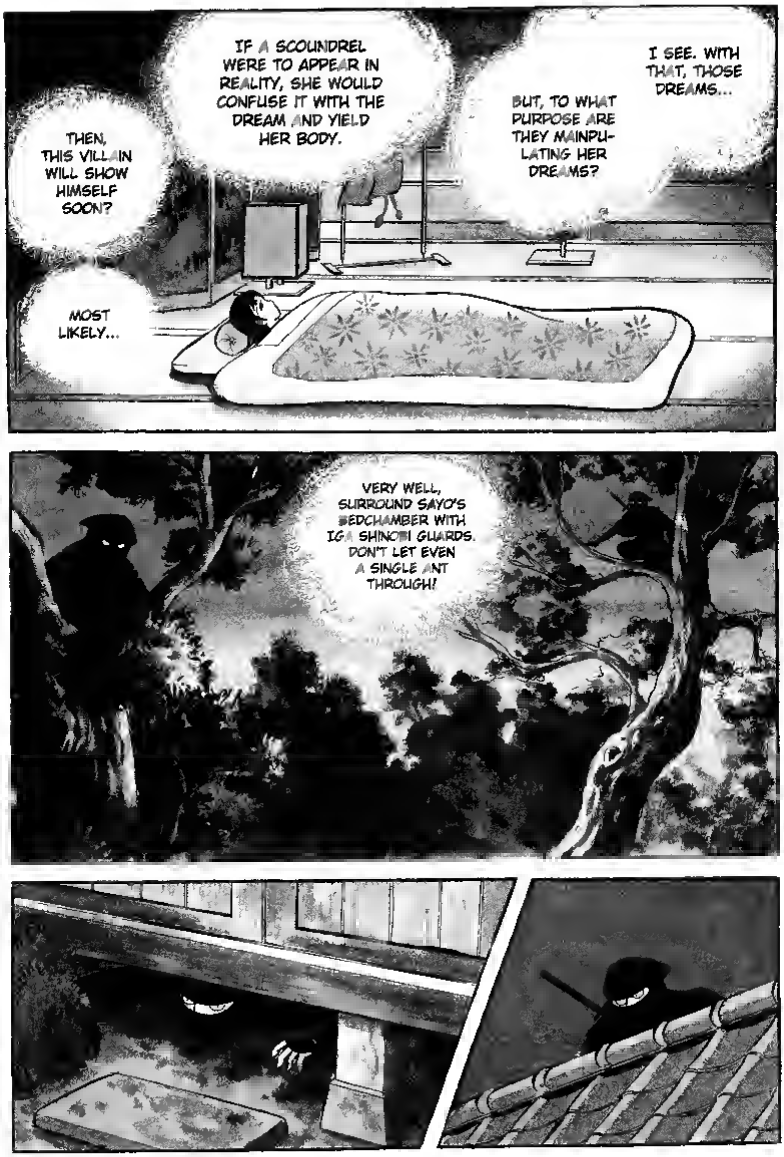
The bloody conflicts of warring daimyou Made all of Japan into a battlefield!! Those battles raged on for more than one hundred long years.


あ
あ…
あ
あ
あ

HAH!
SAYO!!
ANOTHER NIGHTMARE?
WERE YOU HAVING ?
AH!! FATHER!?
A DREAM ?
YES ALWAYS THE SAME DREAM
I... IT WAS... A STRANGE DREAM
IS IT LIKE THIS EVERY NIGHT?

DREAMING ABOUT A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG MAN EVERY NIGHT...
UHOHOHO, SHE'LL BE TAKING A HUSBAND SOON...
UHOHOHO, PRINCESS SAYO IS AROUND THAT AGE.
I SENSE SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THIS.
BUT THESE NIGHTLY DISTURBANCES AREN'T NORMAL...
OH MY... IT'S THAT BAD, IS IT?
OH MY
EVERY NIGHT THAT DREAM MAN TAKES MY DAUGHTER'S BODY...
SHE SAYS THAT THE MAN IN THE DREAM GROWS A LITTLE CLEARER EVERY NIGHT... HE ALREADY APPEARS ALMOST AS IF HE WERE REALLY THERE.
EVERY NIGHT, IT GROWS MORE INTENSE.
HMPH...

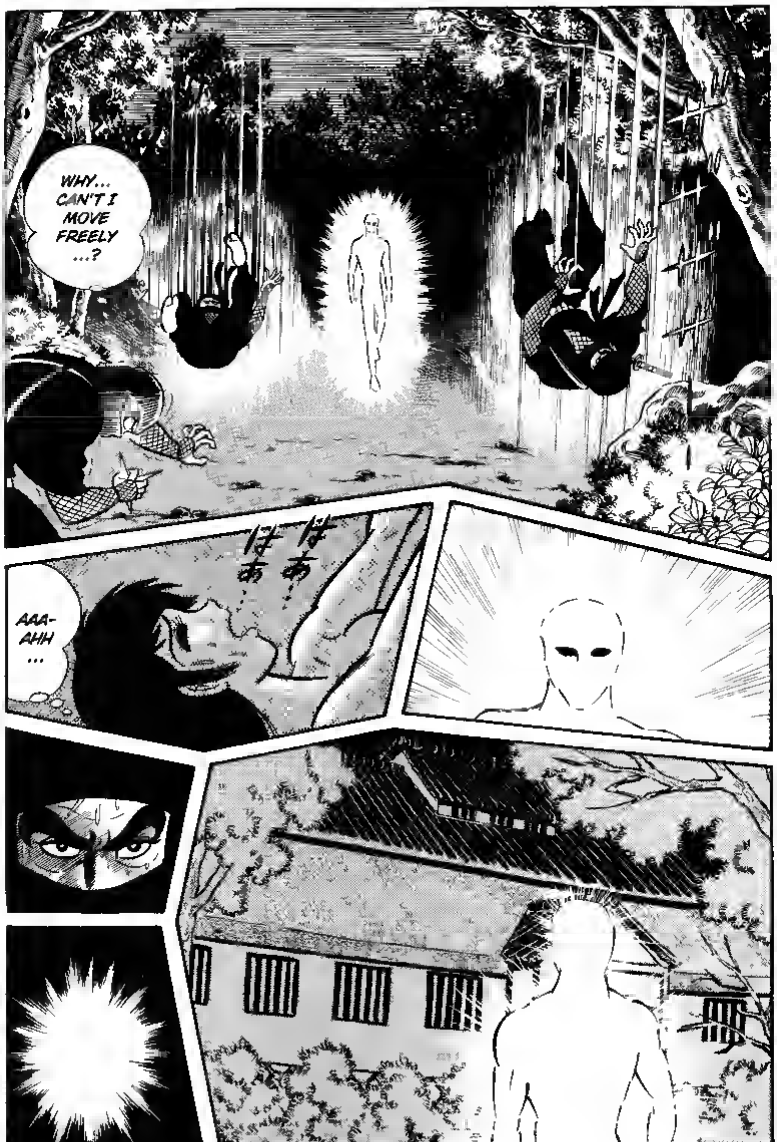
IF SHINOBI ARE TARGETTING SAYO'S BODY...
YOU THINK SO AS WELL?
THAT'S TROUBLING... SHE MAY ME UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF SOME SORT OF SPELL ..
NOW I SEE WHY HER CRIES WERE SO CARNAL..
NO ONE WOULD BE SO IMPRUDENT AS TO TARGET CHIEF MOMOCHI'S DAUGHTER..
IT CAN'T BE THE IGA..
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO IT COULD BE?
OH?
BUT I DO KNOW OF A SIMILAR TECHNIQUE..
IT'S CALLED THE "DREAM TECHNIQUE" ...
SHINOBI CONCEAL THEIR OWN TECHNIQUES, SO KNOWING WHO USES WHAT SORT IS... IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW FOR CERTAIN...
MOREOVER, IT ALLOWS FOR HYPNOTIC SUGGESTIONS
IT IS SAID TO EMPLOY A CERTAIN MEDICINAL PLANT.. A DRUG WHICH CAUSES SEXUAL AROUSAL..


I SEE. WITH THAT, THOSE DREAMS...
BUT, TO WHAT PURPOSE ARE THEY MANIPULATING HER DREAMS?
IF A SCOUNDREL WERE TO APPEAR IN REALITY, SHE WOULD CONFUSE IT WITH THE DREAM AND YIELD HER BODY.
THEN, THIS VILLAIN WILL SHOW HIMSELF SOON?
MOST LIKELY...
VERY WELL, SURROUND SAYO'S BEDCHAMBER WITH IGA SHINOBI GUARDS. DON'T LET EVEN A SINGLE ANT THROUGH!

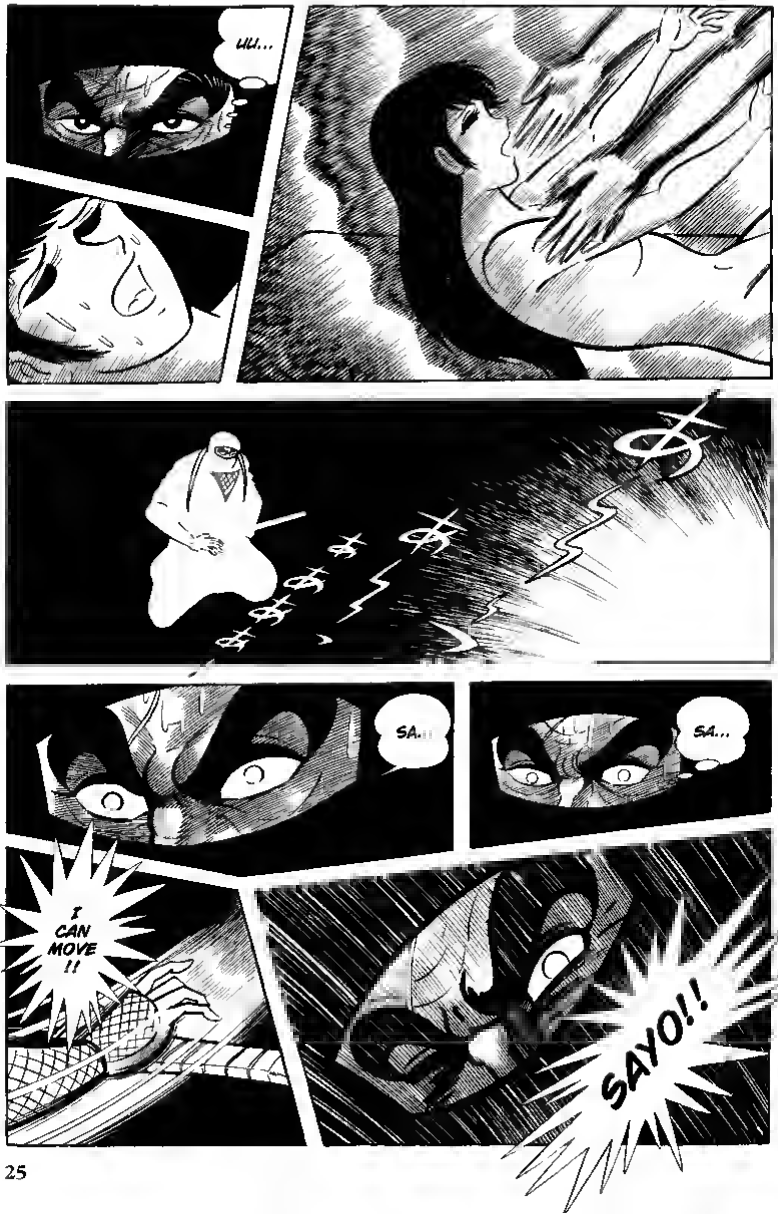
I WILL EXPOSE THE FOOL WHO DARES TO TRY SNEAKING INTO THE NINJA MANOR OF SANDAYUU MOMOCHI, CHIEF OF THE IGA, WITH MY OWN HANDS!
SUUU SUUU
YOU CAN SLEEP IN PEACE.
SAYO, FROM NOW ON, I WILL WATCH OVER YOU EVERY NIGHT...

MU!N!
AAH
ひら〜っ
ニュッ!

WHAT IS THAT LIGHT?
UUH!
MY... MY BODY...
I CAN'T... MOVE.


WHY... CAN'T I MOVE FREELY ...?
はあ
はあ
AAA-AHH ...

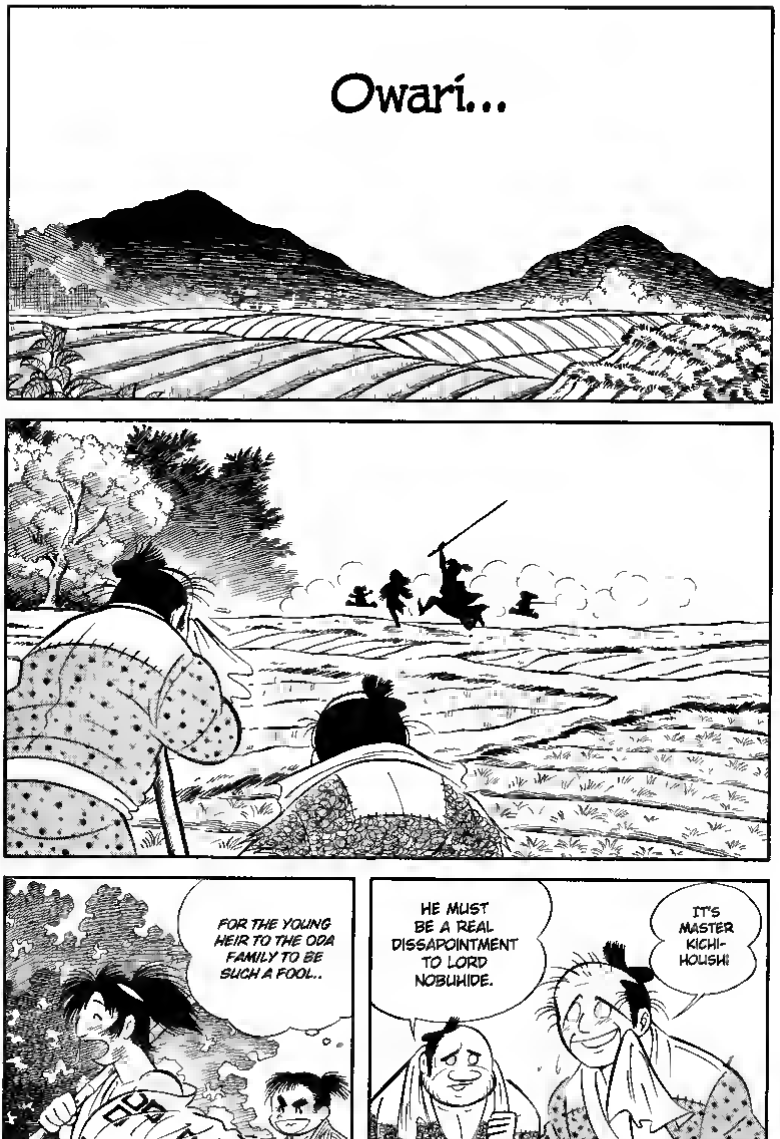
THE INVISIBILITY TECHNIQUE ISN'T WORKING. NO...
HAVE I FALLEN INTO THE ENEMY'S TECHNIQUE? SA-SAYO.
EVEN THOUGH I'M THE LEADER OF THE IGA, SANDAYUU MOMOCHI..
WHAT'S HAPPENING...?
MY BODY WON'T EVEN DO WHAT I TELL IT TO..
I CAN'T EVEN SPEAK ...!?
MY VOICE..
UUUHH IT'S NOT WORKING
AAHHHHH AAAHHHH
HAAHH...
ZU!!

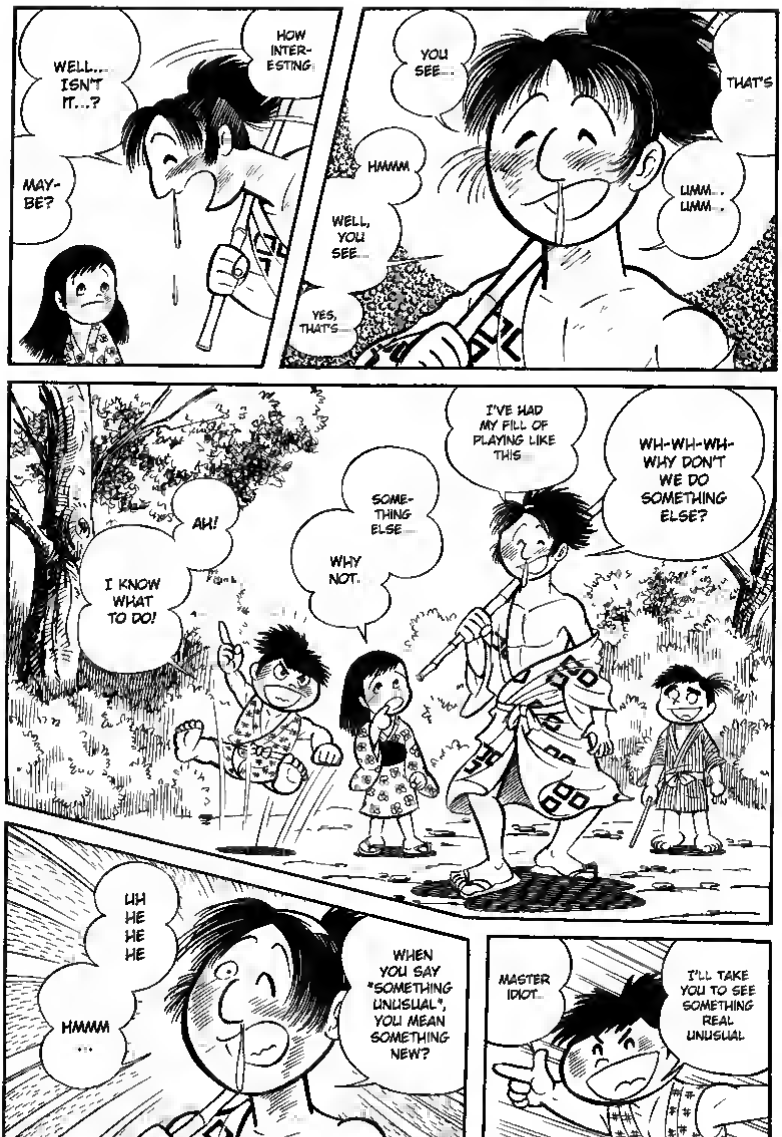

UU...
SA...
SA...
I CAN MOVE !!
SAYO!!

HA!?
Y...
YOU ARE...
SANDAYUU MOMOCHI, LISTEN WELL!
UOOOHHHH

YOUR DAUGHTER, SAYO, IS WITH CHILD!
THE CHILD SHE WILL SOON BEAR WILL BE BORN WITH A DESTINY!!
AND... PATRIOTS WITH THE SAME MISSION WILL GATHER AROUND THAT CHILD!
HE IS STILL A CHILD, BUT SOON...
WHAT IS THE DESTINY THAT CHILD HAS BEEN GIVEN?
TH... THAT DESTINY..
NOBUNAGA... WHO IS THIS NOBUNAGA?
TO DEFEAT NOBUNAGA, THE DEMON KING!

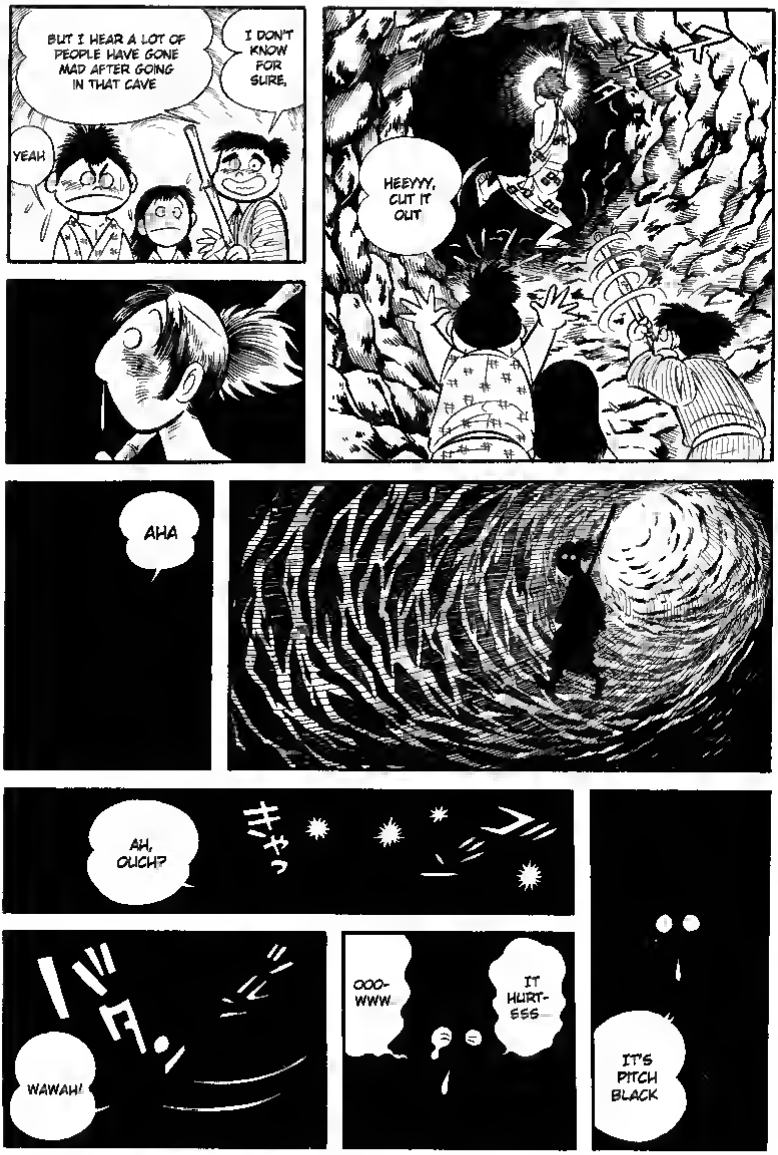
HE WILL BE A MAN WHO WILL BECOME RULER OF JAPAN WITH HIS FEARSOME INTELLECT AND TERRIFYING POWER!!
DEFEAT NOBUNAGA!!
BEEN DREAMING...?
HAVE I...
SOMETHING SO ABSURD...


Owari...
FOR THE YOUNG HEIR TO THE ODA FAMILY TO BE SUCH A FOOL..
HE MUST BE A REAL DISSAPOINTMENT TO LORD NOBUHIDE.
IT'S MASTER KICHI-HOUSHI

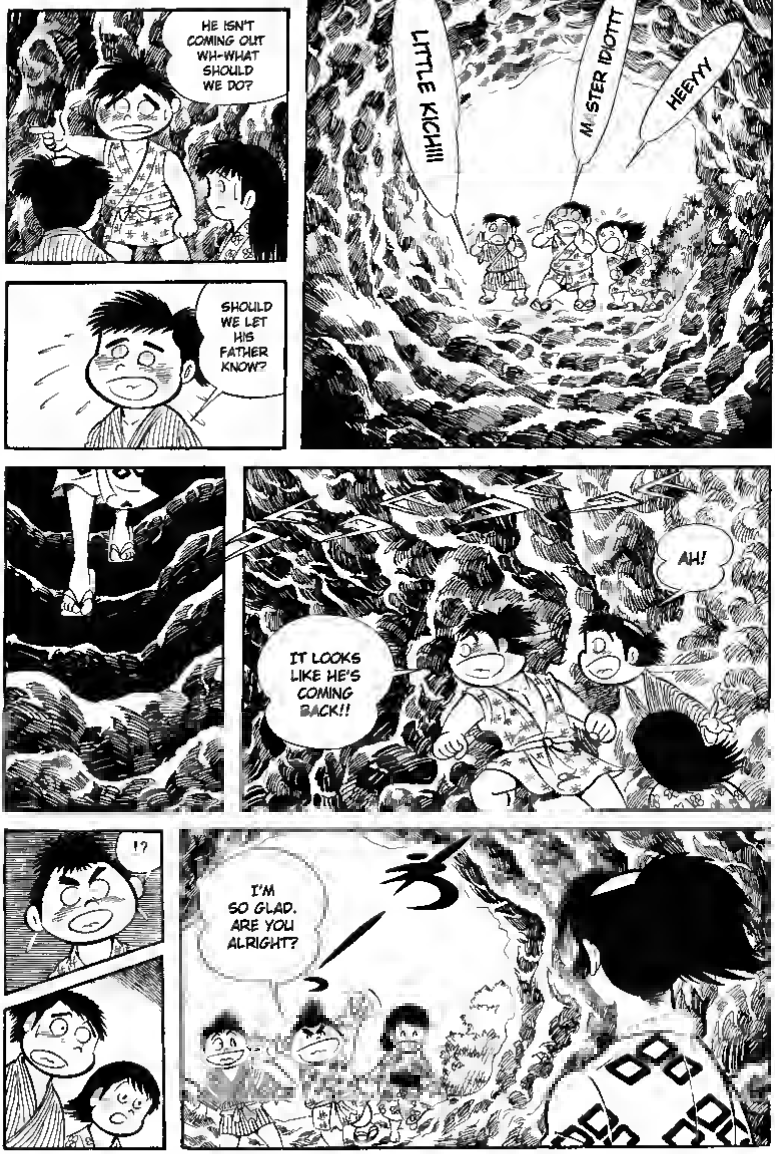

WELL... ISN'T IT...?
MAY-BE?
HOW INTER-ESTING
YOU SEE...
HMMM
WELL, YOU SEE...
YES, THAT'S...
THAT'S...
UMM... UMM...
I'VE HAD MY FILL OF PLAYING LIKE THIS...
WH-WH-WH-WHY DON'T WE DO SOMETHING ELSE?
SOME-THING ELSE...
WHY NOT.
AH!
I KNOW WHAT TO DO!
WHEN YOU SAY "SOMETHING UNUSUAL", YOU MEAN SOMETHING NEW?
UH HE HE HE
HMMM ...
MASTER IDIOT...
I'LL TAKE YOU TO SEE SOMETHING REAL UNUSUAL

LET'S GOOO.
HMM...
I'LL GO.
HYAHOOO
LET'S GOOO!
TAH TA KA TAAA
MORON, IT'S NOT OVER THERE IT'S THIS WAY.

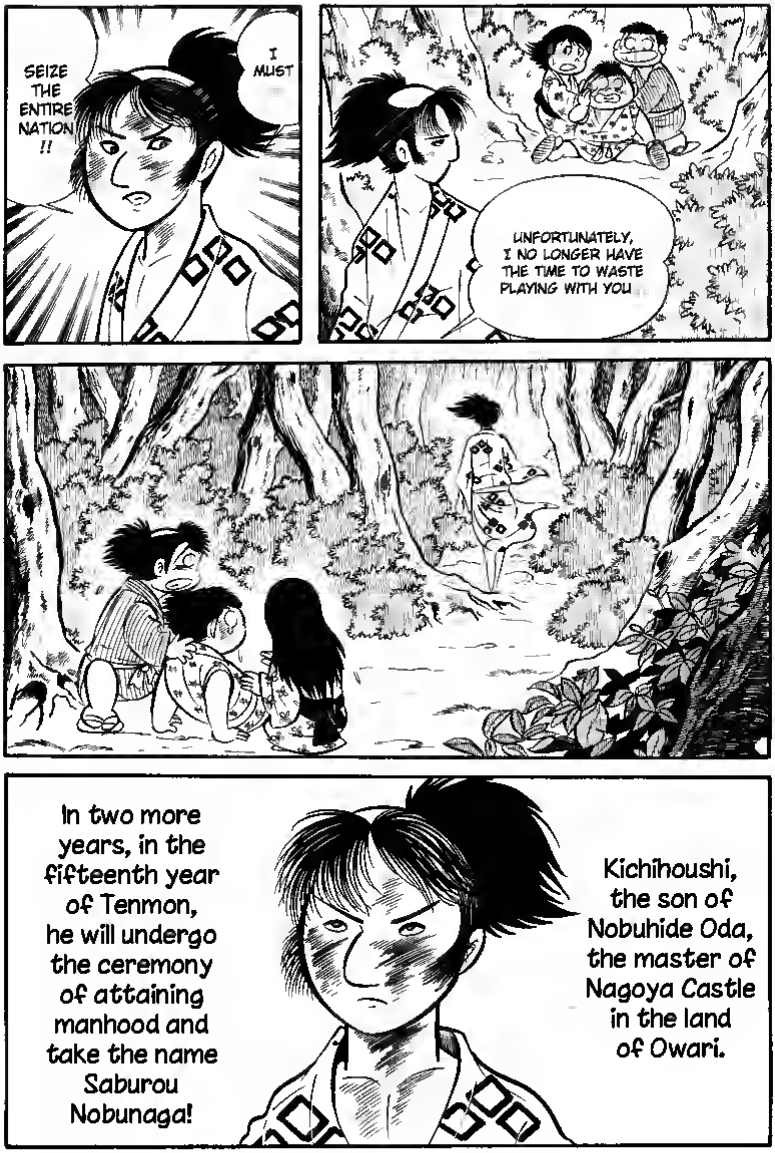
HOW ABOUT IT, LORD IDIOT?
THERE'S A GHOST IN THERE. IT'S SCAARRYYY.
HAVE YOU GOT THE GUTS TO GO INSIDE?
ISN'T IT A NEAT PLACE?
DOESN'T IT LOOK FUN? IT'S A REEALLL DEEP HOLE
THERE REALLY IS A GHOST IN THERE
WAIT, MASATER IDIOT
OYOH!

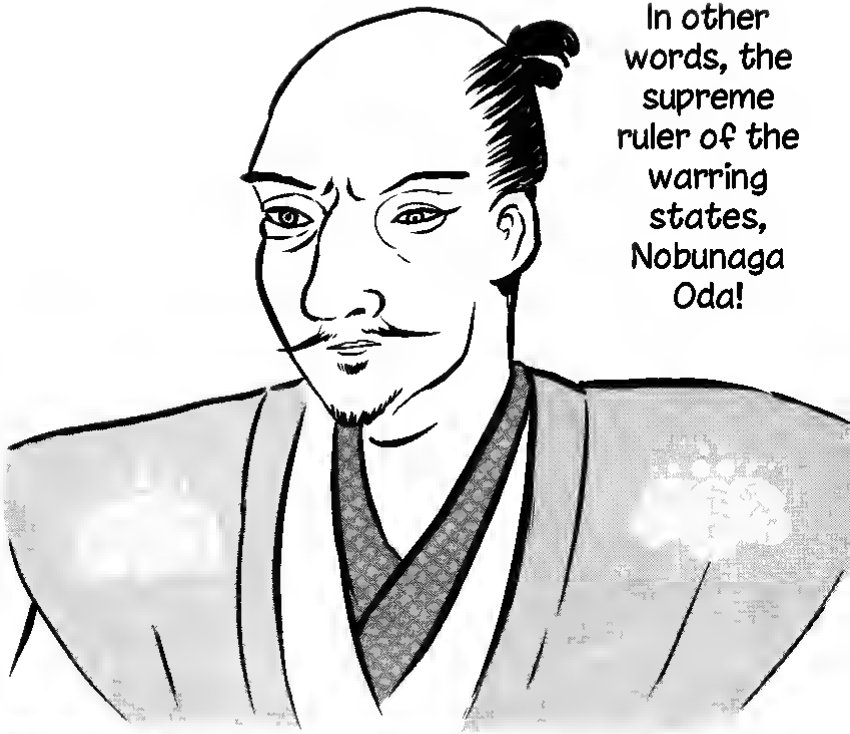

BUT I HEAR A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE GONE MAD AFTER GOING IN THAT CAVE
I DON'T KNOW FOR SURE.
YEAH
HEEYYY, CUT IT OUT
AHA
AH, OUCH?
キャっ
WAWAH!
OOO-WWW.
IT HURT-ESS
IT'S PITCH BLACK

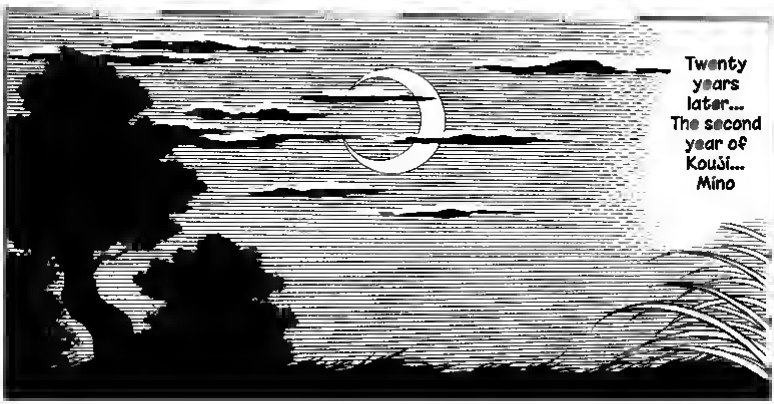
WAH!!
UEENNN, I DON'T KNOW THE WAY BAACKKK...
GYO
GYO EHH HHH ?!
!!
DO NOT RUN, KICHI-HOUSHI!
PATTT
HEE!
I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR THE DAY YOU WOULD COME!
!


HE ISN'T COMING OUT WH-WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
SHOULD WE LET HIS FATHER KNOW?
LITTLE KICHIII
M-STER IDIOTT
HEEYY
IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S COMING BACK!!
AH!
!?
I'M SO GLAD. ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

KICHIHOUSHI THE IDIOT...?
Y.. YOUNG LORD.
H... HAS HIS IDIOCY BEEN CURED?...
THAT'S RIGHT! IT'S KICHIHOUSHI, BUT... WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?
HEE!

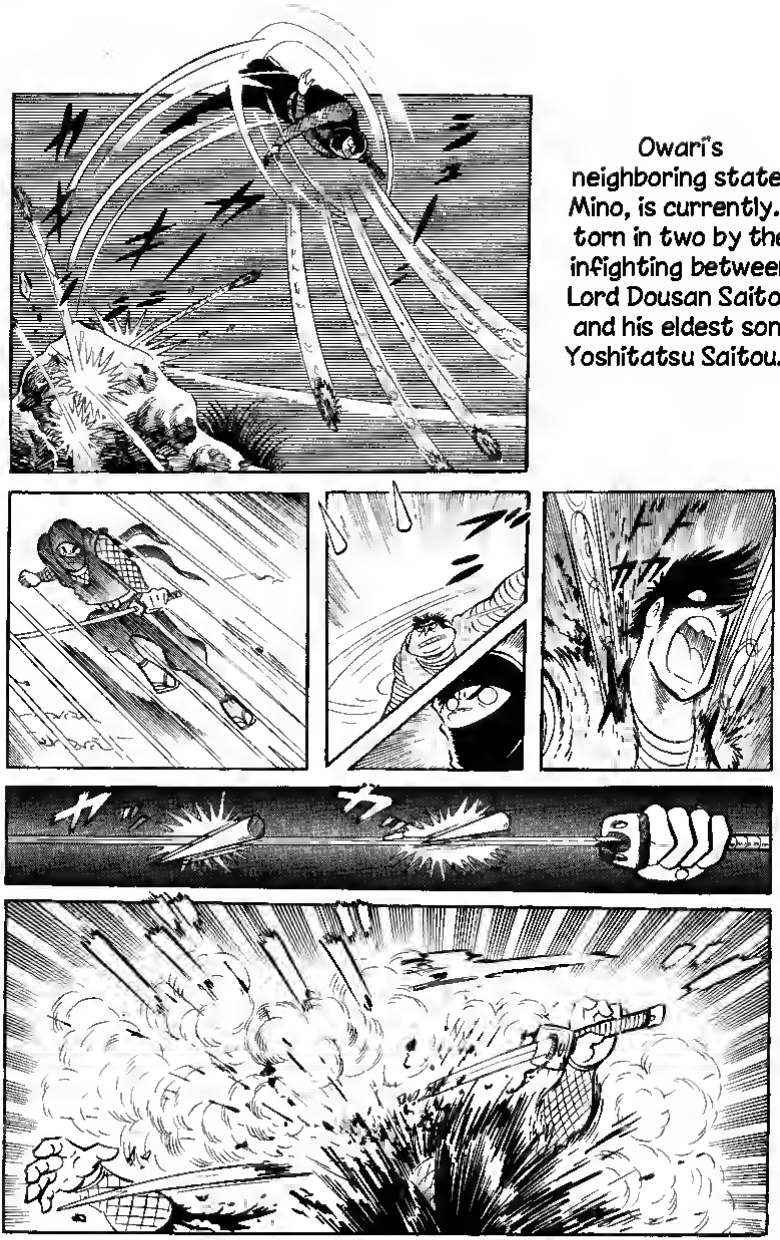

SEIZE THE ENTIRE NATION !!
I MUST
UNFORTUNATELY, I NO LONGER HAVE THE TIME TO WASTE PLAYING WITH YOU
In two more years, in the fifteenth year of Tenmon, he will undergo the ceremony of attaining manhood and take the name Saburou Nobunaga!
Kichihoushi, the son of Nobuhide Oda, the master of Nagoya Castle in the land of Owari.


In other words, the supreme ruler of the warring states, Nobunaga Oda!

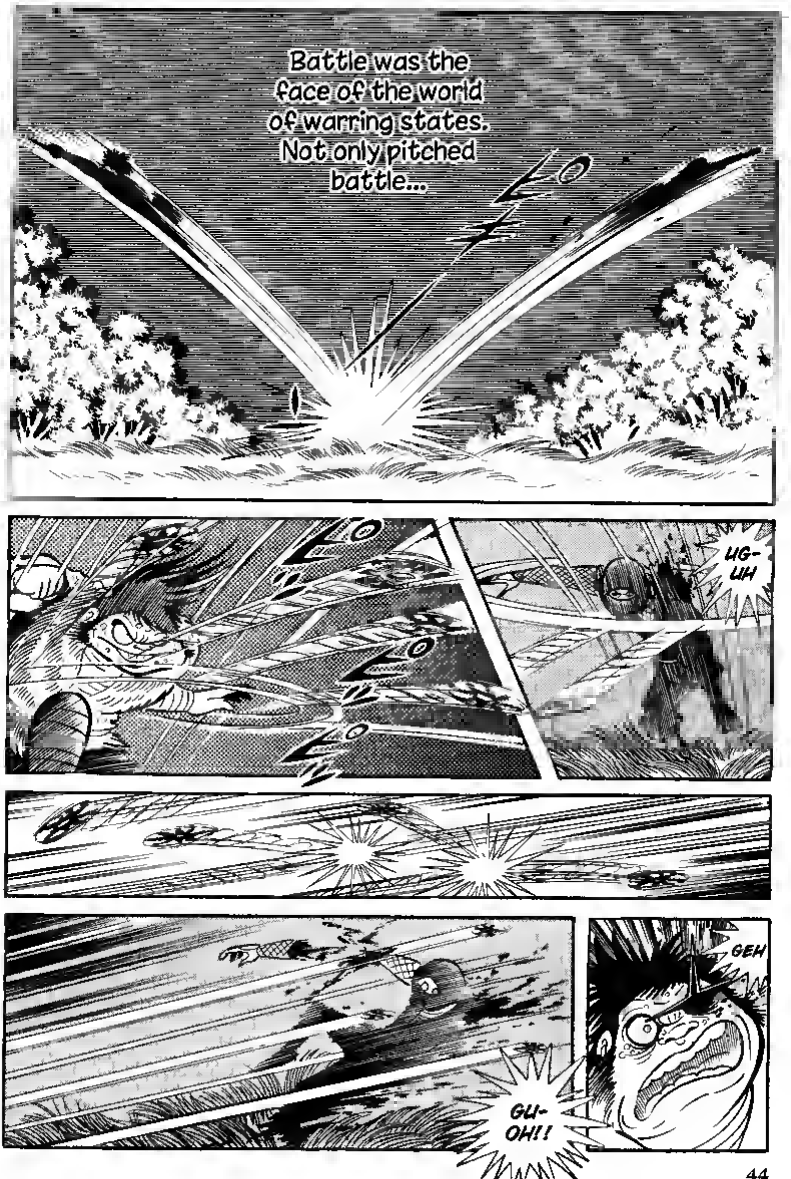

Twenty years later... The second year of Kouši... Mino

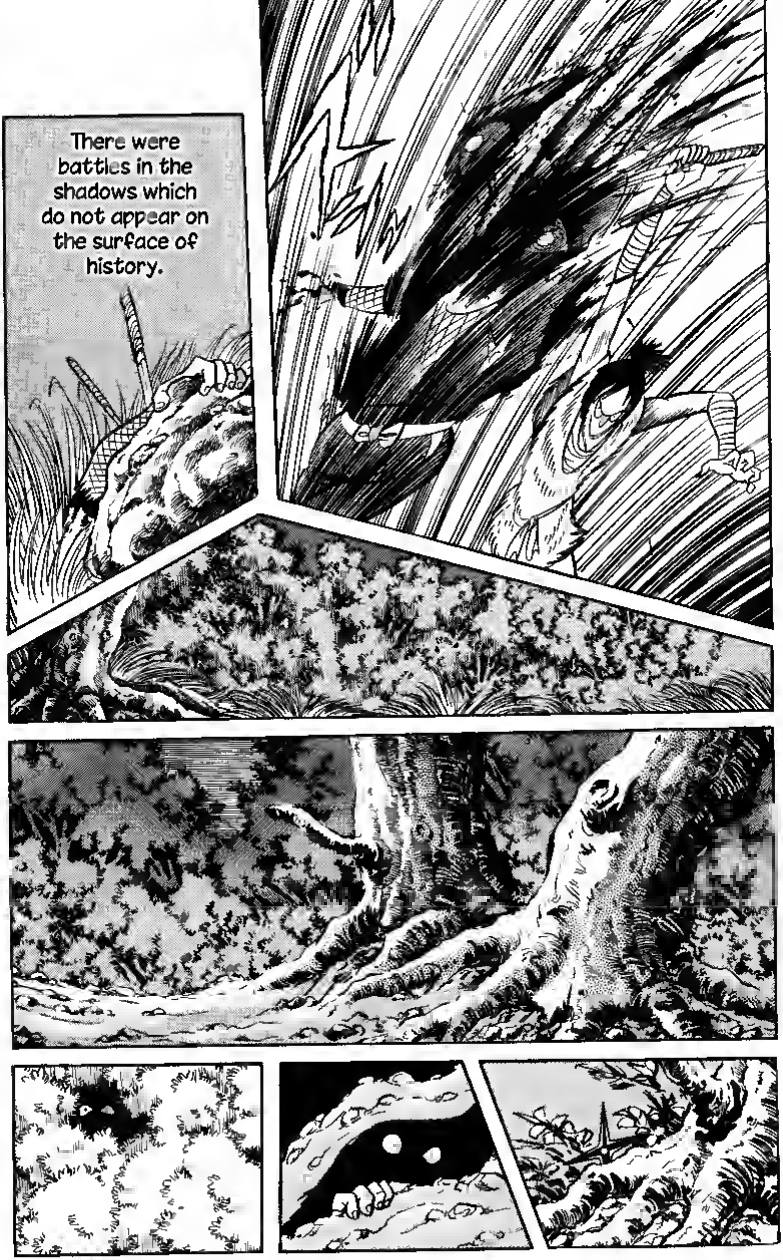
THE ENEMY !!
GUWAH.
UH!
WE'RE SURRO-UNDED!

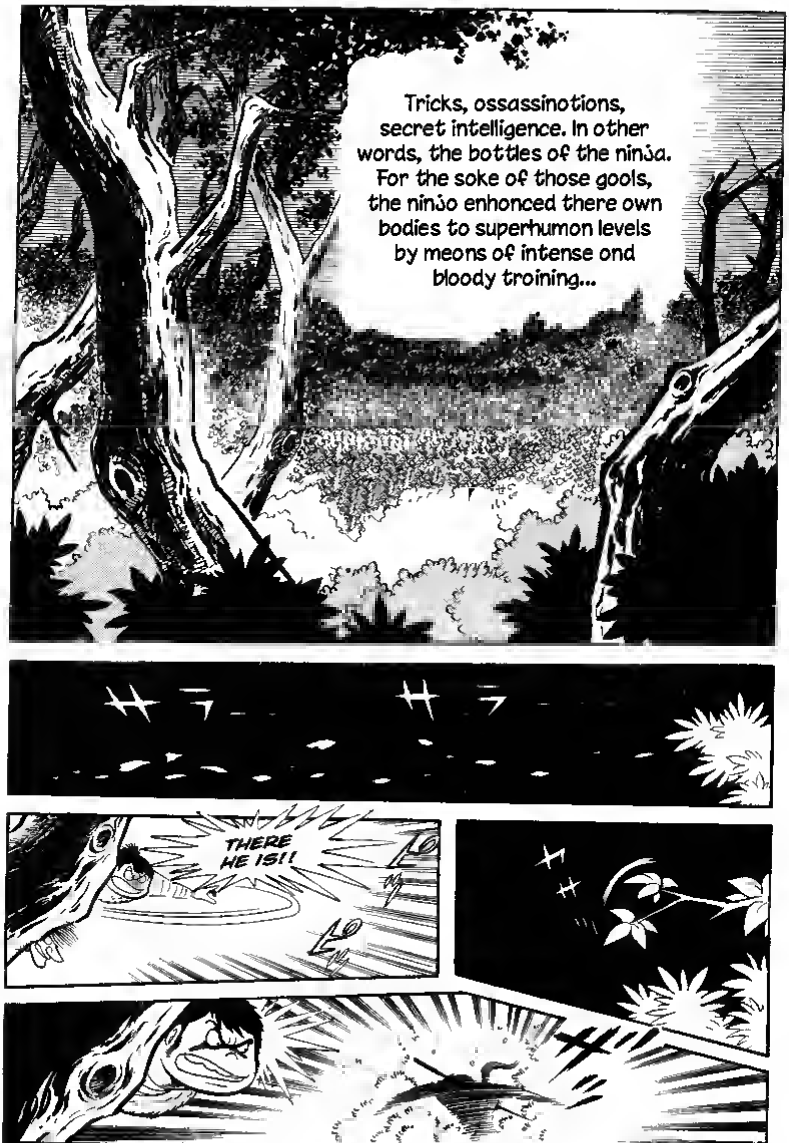
GU-EE-HHH!


Owari's neighboring state, Mino, is currently... torn in two by the infighting between Lord Dousan Saitou and his eldest son, Yoshitatsu Saitou...

UG-
UH!!
スッ
スッ
HYOOH!
OO
HH
HH
ナッ ナッ ナッ ナッ


Battle was the face of the world of warring states. Not only pitched battle...
UG-UH
GEH
GU-OH!!


There were battles in the shadows which do not appear on the surface of history.


Tricks, ossassinotions, secret intelligence. In other words, the bottles of the ninja. For the soke of those gools, the ninjo enhonced there own bodies to superhumon levels by meons of intense ond bloody troining...
THERE HE IS!!

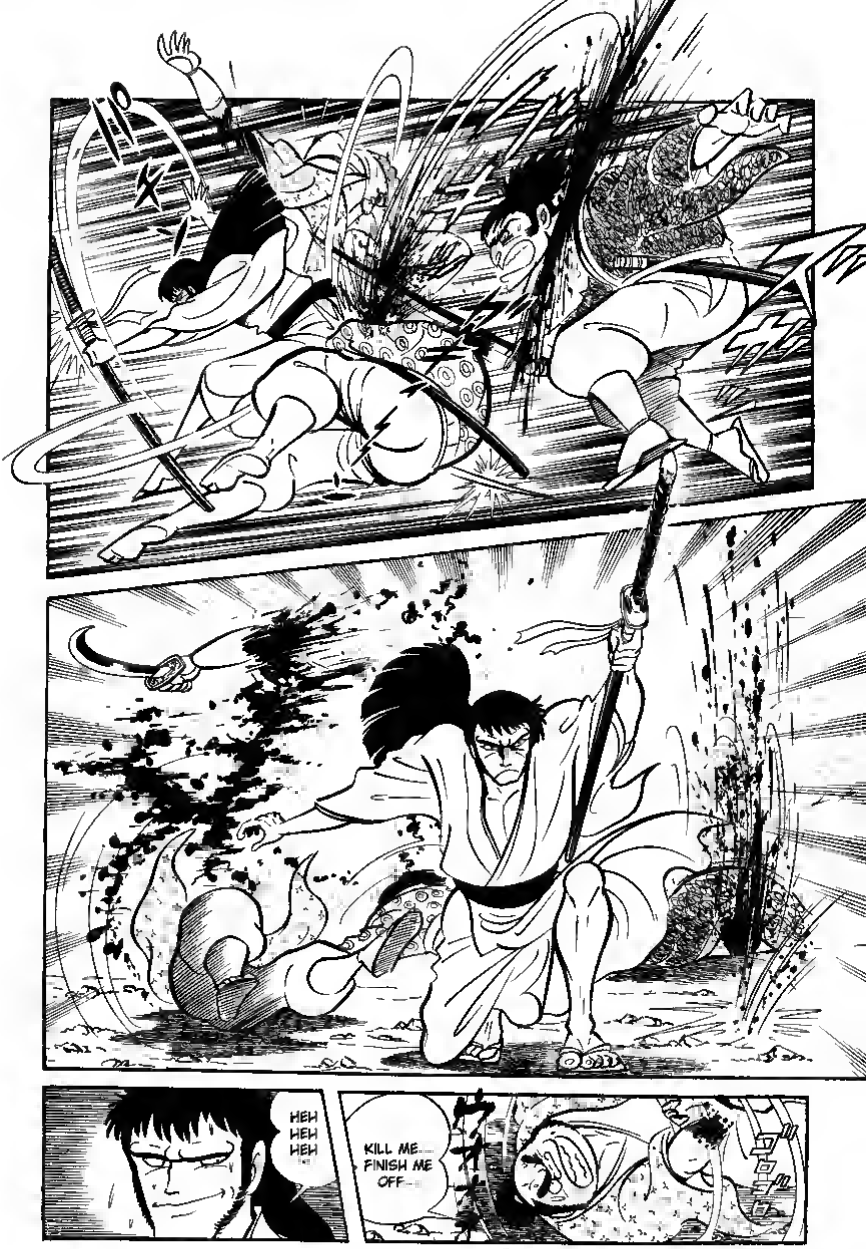
HE'S SHOWN HIMSELF!

And... Now, right here... A ninja is honing those superhuman techniques...

GYAAHHH

SHISHIMARU TENOU.
HIS NAME IS...

うおーっ!!
ダッ
ダッ
ダッ!!


HEH HEH HEH
KILL ME... FINISH ME OFF...

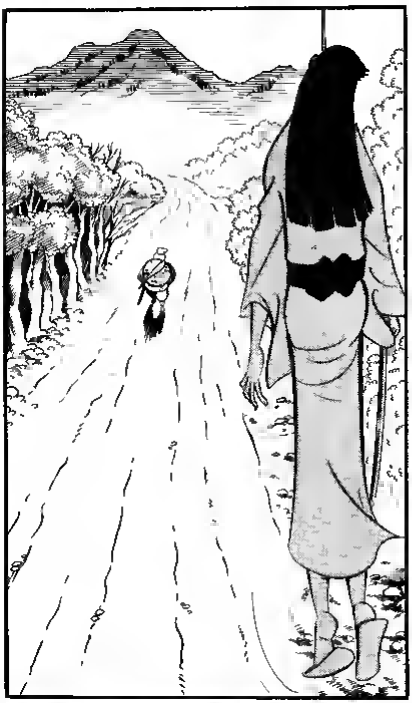
DAMN YOU.
UNTIL THEN, SUFFER THE PAIN OF YOUR DEATH TO THE END
WHY DON'T YOU JUST WAIT PATIENTLY FOR A LITTLE WHILE
THIS MAN...

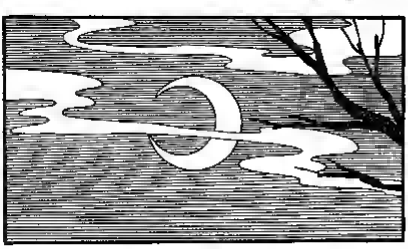
WHO IS HE ...?
THERE ISN'T EVEN THE TINIEST CHINK IN HIS DEFENSES
WHA- WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?
WOULD YOU GRANT ME A LESSON ...?
WAIT! OLD MAN!
HMM
PLAYING DUMB, ARE WE?
WHAT A BOTHER.
I'M A MAN WHO SET OUT TO MAKE A SUCCESS OF MYSELF WITH THIS MURDERER'S CARVING KNIFE...
DO YOU THINK I CAN'T SEE THROUGH YOUR TRICKS!?
HEH HEH HEH...

WELL WELL
I CAN KILL HIM...

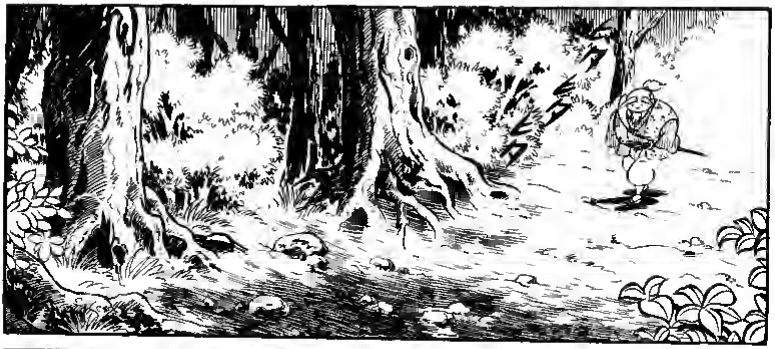
UH!
AHHHHHH
GUH GUH GUH

WHAT A BOTHER.
THERE ARE TOO MANY FOOLS RUSHING TO THEIR DEATHS

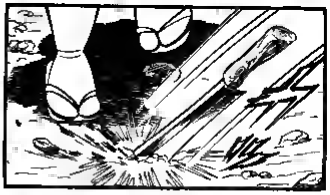




WHAT A FOOL...



YOU CAN'T PASS THROUGH MOMOCHI FORTRESS FROM HERE
TURN BACK!



COME A BIT CLOSER TO MY EARS.
UH !?

I'M A BIT HARD OF HEARING
HUHH ..? WHAT'S THAT ..?

HUUHHH?

TCH, THIS OLD BASTARD

tooth
S-SO YOU'RE A SHINOBI?
HUU-HHH?
DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE! HE'S A SHINOBI!!
FOOL! DO YOU THINK YOU CAN INFILTRATE MOMOCHI FORT-RESS?

HOH
ヒュン
ヒュン

ははは
NUH!! YOU ARE ...?
IT'S ME, GOEMON.
I'M GLAD YOU MADE IT BACK SAFELY, SHISHI-MARU!
I HEAR MINO IS IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIERCE BATTLE
SHISHI-MARU!!
SO IT'S YOU?

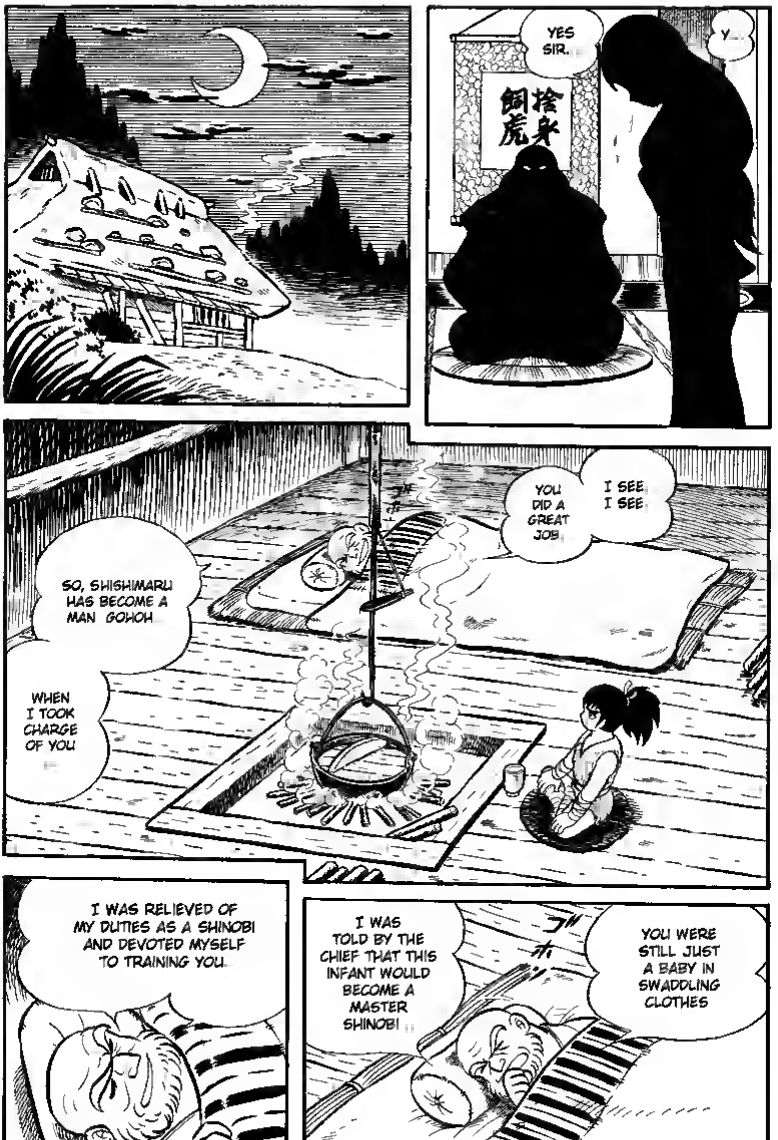
THE CHIEF...?
SO, THEY'RE ALL DEAD
I SEE...
EVERYONE WAS KILLED I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT.
YOU SHOULD GO REPORT TO HIM IN HIS MANOR...
THAT KID...
SEE YOU.
ALRIGHT! WE'LL TALK AGAIN LATER...
AL-RIGHT
EVEN THOUGH HE'S STILL A CHILD...
HE'LL BE A FRIGH-TENING ONE...
HE BLOCKED MY KILLING STROKE SO EASILY...

LEADER! SHISHIMARU TENOU HAS RETURNED
SO, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO MADE IT BACK...?
YES
HOW IS THE SITUATION IN MINO?
YES SIR, IT'S STILL BACK AND FORTH
I SEE... THEN I WILL CHOOSE AN ASSASSIN FROM THE IGA AND SEND THEM TO MINO
YOU HAVE DONE WELL YOU MAY RETIRE
NEITHER SIDE CAN BE SAID TO HAVE THE ADVANTAGE YET
THE IMPATIENT DRAGON (YOSHITATSU) WANT TO USE WE OF THE IGA TO TAKE THE OLD HEAD (DOUSAN)...

!
SHISHI-MARU..
ONLY A BRIEF COMMENT TCH.
MAN, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS MY FIRST BIG JOB...
I'LL LOSE MY MOTI-VATION.
SO I CAME AS FAST AS I COULD...
I HEARD YOU CAME BACK ..
YOU'RE AMAZING, SHISHIMARU.
YAHOOO! OYUU.
YOU COM-PLETED AN IMPORTANT DUTY...
NO, MORE THAN THAT...
SOON, YOU'LL BE THE BEST NINJA IN IGA...
TE HE HE
I GUESS THAT'S TRUE YEAH... I WILL BE!
YOU'RE A FULL-FLEDGED NINJA NOW

I'LL TREAT YOU TO DINNER TODAY. GRANDFATHER IS WAITING.
SURE.
OYUU.
OYUU, THE CHIEF IS CALLING FOR YOU.
HUH! FOR ME...?
I WONDER WHAT IT COULD BE...?
SHISHIMARU, GO ON AHEAD. I'LL BE BACK SOON...
SURE.

YES SIR.
CHIEF, OYUU HAS ARRIVED
OH, OYUU, COME IN!
I'LL BE FIF-TEEN.
OYUU, HOW OLD WILL YOU BE THIS YEAR?
HMMM.
OYUU, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND?
I SEE. FIFTEEN.
HUH ...?
YES SIR.
OYUU, I WANT TO SEE YOUR SKIN
THAT'S...
HUH!?
OYUU, WOULD YOU PLEASE REMOVE YOUR KIMONO?

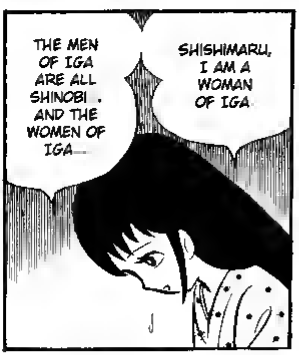

YES SIR.
捨身飼虎
Y...
I SEE. I SEE.
YOU DID A GREAT JOB.
SO, SHISHIMARU HAS BECOME A MAN GOHOH.
WHEN I TOOK CHARGE OF YOU
I WAS RELIEVED OF MY DUTIES AS A SHINOBI AND DEVOTED MYSELF TO TRAINING YOU.
I WAS TOLD BY THE CHIEF THAT THIS INFANT WOULD BECOME A MASTER SHINOBI!
YOU WERE STILL JUST A BABY IN SWADDLING CLOTHES

NO WAY, YOU CAN'T BE OLD ENOUGH TO DIE YET, GRANDPA
AND MY WORK HAS BEEN REWARDED
WITH THIS, I CAN DIE PEACEFULLY
I WAS CALLED A MASTER OF THE IGA STYLE TECHNIQUES, AND I TAUGHT YOU EVERYTHING
OYUU AND I WERE RAISED LIKE BROTHER AN SISTER. I LIKE HER A LOT.
YES, OF COURSE I WILL
NO, THIS NO GOOD BODY WON'T LISTEN TO ME ANYMORE
SHISHIMARU, PLEASE HELP THAT GIRL
MY GRAND-DAUGHTER, OYUU, IS MY ONLY WORRY
AH.
I SEE. I SEE
YOU CAN RELAX, GRANDPA
OYUU.

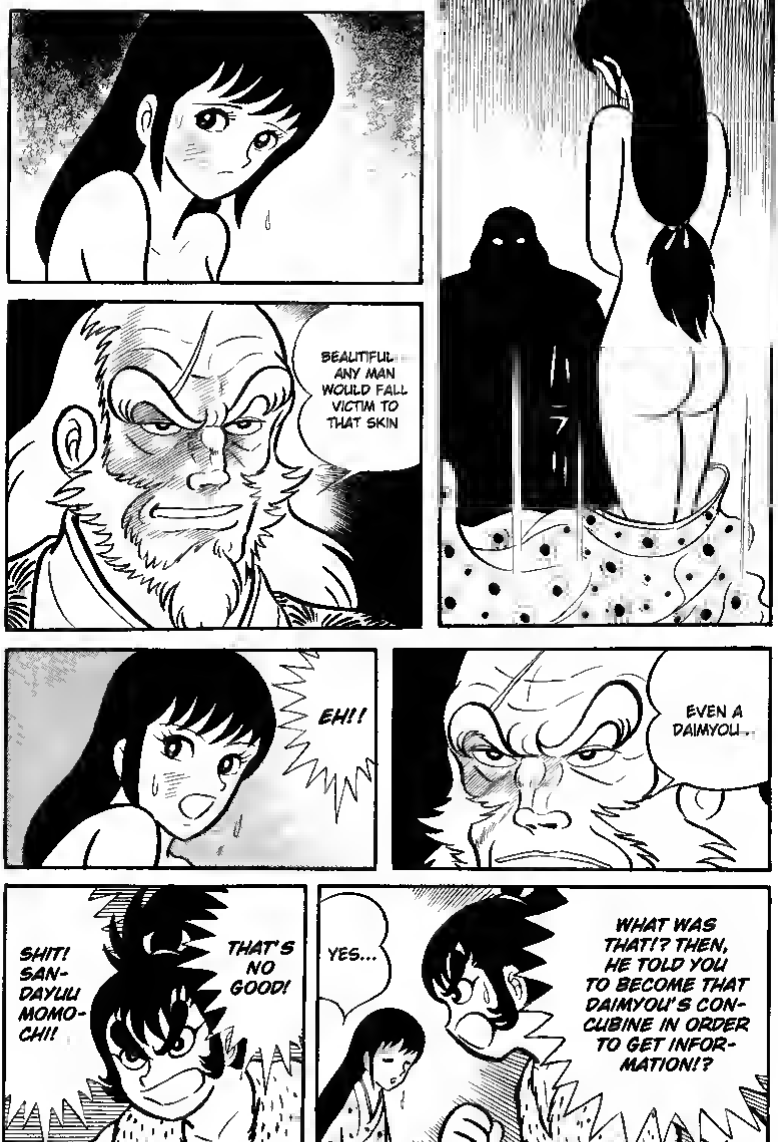
N-NOTHING VERY IMPOR-TANT...
OYUU, WHAT DID THE CHIEF WANT...?

L I A R !

THE COLOR OF YOUR FACE HAS CHANGED SINCE YOU CAME BACK.


THE MEN OF IGA ARE ALL SHINOBI . AND THE WOMEN OF IGA...
SHISHIMARU, I AM A WOMAN OF IGA.

DID YOU THINK I WOULDN'T NOTICE THAT?


BEAUTIFUL... ANY MAN WOULD FALL VICTIM TO THAT SKIN
EH!!
EVEN A DAIMYOU...
SHIT! SAN-DAYUU MOMO-CHI!
THAT'S NO GOOD!
YES...
WHAT WAS THAT!? THEN, HE TOLD YOU TO BECOME THAT DAIMYOU'S CONCUBINE IN ORDER TO GET INFORMATION!?

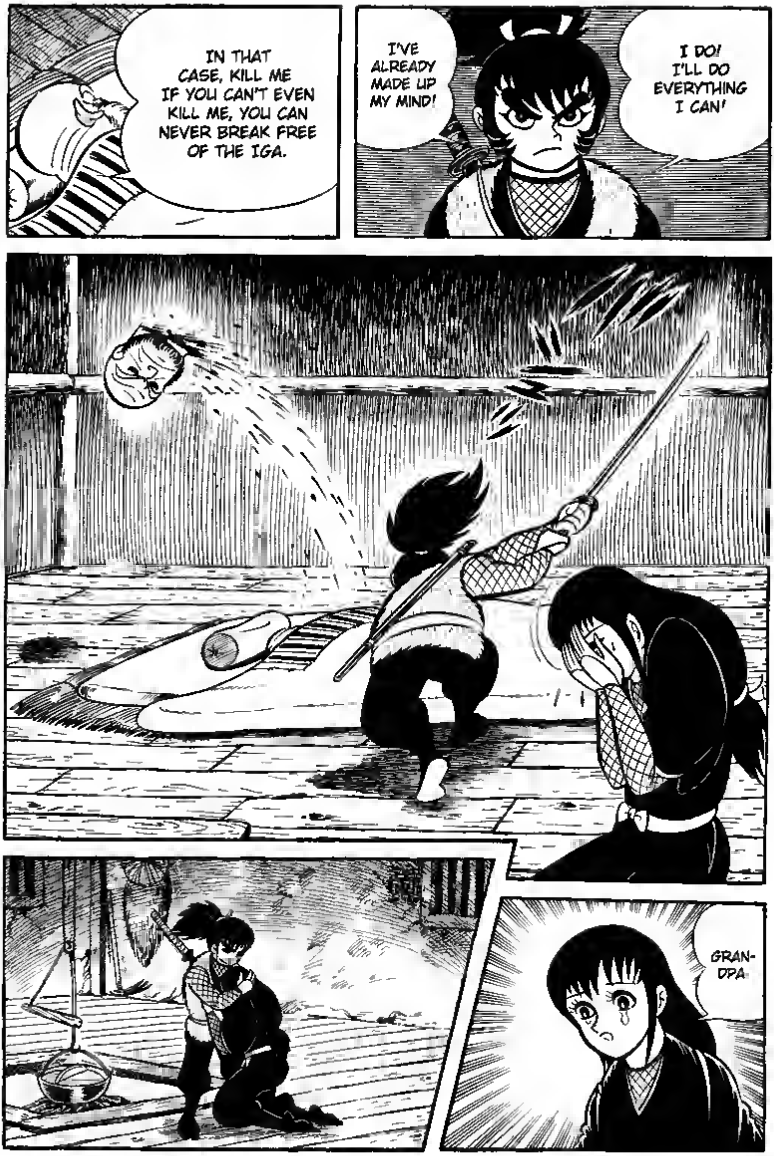
THIS IS THE FATE OF THE WOMEN OF IGA...
BUT, I CANNOT GO AGAINST THE CHIEF.
DOES HE MEAN TO MAKE OYUU DO A JOB LIKE THAT!?
HUH!?
OYUU! LET'S RUN AWAY FROM IGA!
WE'LL BREAK THE LAWS OF THE IGA NINJA!
WE'LL...
IF I WERE NOT A WOMAN OF IGA,
IF...
I WOULD HAVE WANTED TO BE YOUR BRIDE, SHISHIMARU!
NO... I'LL DO IT!!
WE'D BE KILLED... SOMETHING LIKE THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE
WE CAN'T! DON'T BE RIDICULOUS

SHOW YOURSELF!
UH!
HEH HEH HEH
I HEARD YOU, SHISHIMARU!
I'LL SQUEAL TO THE CHIEF. YOU'RE FINISHED, SHISHIMARU.
HEE HEE HEE
UH
YOU HEARD, BUT YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO TELL ANYONE!

Y-YOU KILLED HIM...?
YEAH.. EVEN THOUGH HE WAS AN ALLY
WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO GO THROUGH WITH IT NOW!

FOR-GIVE ME, GRANDPA.
IF WE LEAVE IGA, GRANDPA WILL FACE A TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT
IT WILL BE A MERCY FOR HIM TO DIE BY MY HAND
IT.. IT'S NO GOOD. I CAN'T KILL GRANDPA.
HE WAS A PARENT TO ME WHEN I HAD NONE AND MY TEACHER IN THIS NINJA ARTS.
THERE'S NO WAY I COULD KILL HIM!

SO YOU WERE AWAKE, GRANDPA.
I DON'T REMEMBER RAISING YOU TO BE SUCH A WEAK SHINOBI!
SHISHIMARU, WHY DON'T YOU STRIKE?
I UNDER-STAND WHAT YOU INTEND TO DO...
I KNOW THAT!
WHEREVER YOU FLEE TO, THE IGA NINJA WILL COME AFTER YOU AND KILL YOU!
TO LIVE HAVING BROKEN THE LAWS OF IGA IS NOT A PLEASANT THING.
DO YOU UNDER-STAND THAT...?
YOU WILL LIKELY BRING HER GREATER MISFORTUNE
I WON'T LET HER BECOME A KUNOICHI.
BUT, I WANT TO MAKE OYUU HAPPY.


IN THAT CASE, KILL ME IF YOU CAN'T EVEN KILL ME, YOU CAN NEVER BREAK FREE OF THE IGA.
I'VE ALREADY MADE UP MY MIND!
I DO! I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN!
GRAN-DPA

DON'T LET SHISHI-MARU GET AWAY!
WHAT!?
CHIEF!!
JUUZOU OF AKAZA'S HEAD HAS BEEN SEVERED AND SHISHIMARU AND OYUU HAVE VANISHED!
DON'T LET HIM SET ONE FOOT OUTSIDE OF IGA!!
AH!

HAVE YOU LOST SIGHT OF YOUR JOB? WELL NOW...

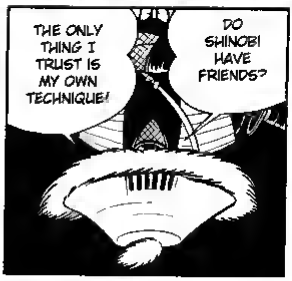
GOEMON, PLEASE OVERLOOK US...
IF YOU DON'T...
IF I DON'T, THEN WHAT ...?

I'LL CUT DOWN EVEN YOU, MY BEST FRIEND!

"BEST FRIEND"...? HEH HEH HEH

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE IN A BIG HURRY, SHISHIMARU.
GOE-MON!

ARE YOU SERIOUS, GOEMON?
JUST ONCE, I WANTED... TO FIGHT YOU FOR REAL!


THE ONLY THING I TRUST IS MY OWN TECHNIQUE!
DO SHINOBI HAVE FRIENDS?

I JUST KILLED MY GRAND-FATHER!
IF YOU SAY YOU WANT TO DO THIS FOR REAL,
THEN LET'S GO!!
GOEMON ISHI-KAWA!?
!!
HAH !!

HA HA HA HA HA, LOOKS LIKE YOU MADE A MISTAKE
OOPS. DON'T MOVE, SHISHI-MARU
OR OYUU WILL DIE
KYAAAHHH!!
SHIT!
ふっ!
AH!
THAT'S RIGHT
WASN'T THIS GOING TO BE A SERIOUS FIGHT?
THAT'S DIRTY, GOE-MON!
I WON'T LET MY GUARD DOWN JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE A KID FIVE YEARS YOUNGER THAN ME
THIS IS MY STYLE OF SERIOUS BATTLE
THAT MEANS I'LL USE ANY STRATEGY THAT COULD BE EFFECTIVE!

WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO WITH OYUU...?
DON'T BE IN SUCH A RUSH, YOU'LL KNOW SOON.
HEH HEH HEH
OYUU, TAKE OFF YOUR KIMONO!
WHAT? EVEN IF YOU USE BOTH HANDS, YOU WON'T FALL.
YOUR HAIR'S TIED UP TIGHT, AFTER ALL.
WHAT'S WRONG, OYUU? WHY AREN'T YOU STRIPPING?
OR DO YOU WANT YOUR THROAT CUT?
YOU LOW-LIFE BASTARD!
HEH HEH HEH, THAT'S RIGHT, THAT'S GOOD!
EVERY TIME I PRESSED YOU, I CAME OUT LOOKING LIKE A FOOL.
BUT YOU'LL LISTEN TO WHAT I SAY OBEDIENTLY NOW... WON'T YOU, OYUU?
OYUU..

I UNDERSTAND WHY SHISHIMARU DIDN'T WANT YOU TO BECOME A KUNOICHI!
HEH HEH HEH, THIS IS A GREAT VIEW, OYUU.
I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WERE SUCH A COWARD!
DAMN YOU, GOEMON.
YOU VILLAIN!!
SO A GREAT VILLAIN IS A MASTER SHINOBI!
THEY'RE NOTHING LIKE THE FAIR-AND-SQUARE WAYS OF THE SAMURAI
THE TECHNIQUES OF THE SHINOBI... ARE VILLAINOUS BY NATURE...
THAT'S RIGHT, I'M A VILLAIN.
HEH HEH HEH

HEH HEH HEH, THEY'RE PIT VIPERS, OYUU . AREN'T THEY ADORABLE ..?
KYAAAAHHHH!!
AH . AAAHH. NO.
DON'T MOVE, OYUU! STAY MOTIONLESS
IF YOU MOVE, YOU'LL BE BITTEN.
THEY'RE SAYING THEY WANT TO SLITHER ALL OVER OYUU'S SKIN.
OYUU!
IT SEEMS THE VIPERS LIKE OYUU'S SKIN
HEH HEH HEH

WHAT DO YOU THINK, SHISHIMARU? THERE'S NO TELLING WHEN OYUU WILL BE BITTEN
YOU'RE IN SUSPENSE!
THAT DISORDER IN YOU MIND IS MY OBJECTIVE!!
LET'S GO, SHISHI-MARU!!
CURSE YOU, GOE-MON.
I WON'T FOR-GIVE YOU!!

THIS IS OUR MATCH !!
OO OOO HHH HH HH

At that time,
in the wartorn
land of Mino, a
bizarre stragegist
appears...

That man, Jinnai Douma, succluded himself in the mountains for three years... and acquired a bizarre technique...
HALT!! WHO GOES THERE !?
That technique is...

I WISH TO MEET WITH LORD MUMASHI!
WHAT!? WITH THE LORD? WHAT DOES HE TAKE US FOR!?
YOU RANK AND FILE WOUDN'T UNDERSTAND! CARRY A MESSAGE TO DOUSAN SAITOU!!
THE GURADIAN GOD OF HIS LIFE HAS COME!

DO YOU THINK THE LORD WILL MEET WITH A STRANGER OF UNKOWN BIRTH IN THE MIDDLE OF A BATTLEFIELD!?
IF YOU DON'T GO, WE'LL CUT YOU DOWN.
YOU SHADY BASTARD! GO AWAY!
うぉーっ
HEH HEH HEH... I WONDER IF YOU CAN CUT ME?

Jinnai Douma was immortal...

That technique was the technique of immortality!!

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ドドド

ドスッ
TOOOuu!!
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ヒュッ

Shishimaru has used the invisibility technique (a technique to conceal one's presence). He hates fighting from a position of disadvantage, so he's stabilizing his spirit and waiting for his chance.

HEH HEH HEH HEH... I PREPARED A DEVICE FOR A TIME LIKE THIS
BUT THAT WILL BE WHAT COSTS YOU YOUR LIFE.
HEH HEH
COME OUT, SHISHI-MARU!
SHISHIMARU! IT'S USELESS TO HIDE! YOU CAN'T ESCAPE FROM ME!
I'M RIGHT HERE!
I'M RIGHT BESIDE YOU!

WHEN YOU MOVE TOWARDS THE VOICE, IT WILL BE THE END OF YOU.
COME OUT, SHISHI-MARU.
I CAN'T SENSE ANYTHING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE VOICE
IT'S STR-ANGE
SHISHI-MARU! WHAT'S WRONG?
I'LL CHANGE THE DIR-ECTION OF THE VOICE!
SO, HE DIDN'T FALL FOR IT... ALRIGHT THEN
IF YOU TAKE YOUR TIME, OYUU WILL DIE!
IF THAT'S THE CASE, I CAN'T WIN USING THE INVISIBILITY TECHNIQUE...
IS HE SKILLED ENOUGH TO MOVE AROUND WITHOUT MY SENSING HIM?
THE LOCATION OF THE VOICE HAS CHANGED ...

IT'S NO GOOD...
WHEN YOU COME OUT, I'LL SEND YOU TO THE NEXT WORLD WITH ONE SHOT FROM THIS SHINOBI BOW.
COME OUT, SHISHI-MARU...
COME OUT!
YOU CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER.
COME OUT, SHISHI-MARU.
IF I OVER-ESTIMATE MY ENEMY, I'LL LOSE...
ALRIGHT
HE CAN'T BE THAT MUCH OF A MASTER. THERE MUST BE SOME TRICK.
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY!

EE EE !!!
FUUU ...
WELL, THIS IS A NICE SCENE. UH HEH HEH
AH!
HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE
HAH!

OYUU, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE TRYING TO LEAVE THE IGA.
UH HEH HEH HEH, I COULDN'T RESIST GOING OUT FOR A STROLL.
I DIDN'T THING I'D COME ACROSS SUCH A SPLENDID SCENE.
IT'S QUITE NICE, ISN'T IT, OYUU...?
THE CHIEF SENT OUT ORDERS TO CAPTURE YOU.
YOU'RE LIKE THIS...
AND I CAN'T SEE SHISHI-MARU ANY-WHERE.
UH HEH HEH, LOOKS LIKE I HIT THE BULLSEYE!
IT LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE FOUND YOU
SHISHI-MARU MUST BE FIGHTING WITH THEM
UH HEH HEH
ALL THOSE WHO TRY TO LEAVE THE IGA MUST BE KILLED.

AH!
I MIGHT HELP YOU OUT...
HUH!?
UH HEH HEH
UH HEH HEH, BUT, YOU KNOW,
DEPENDANT UPON YOUR HEART...
AH!

I'LL SAVE YOU. EH HEH HEH HEH
OYUU! WHY DON'T YOU RUN AWAY WITH ME? UH HEH HEH HEH, IF YOU DO...
UH HEH HEH HEH
HOW ABOUT IT, OYUU
KILL
DON'T RUN, OYUU I'M SERIOUS!
I ASKED NICELY. I'M REACHING OUT TO YOU.
YOU BITCH!
UH HEH HEH HEH, WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU RUN OFF WITH A BRAT LIKE SHISHIMARU?
YOOO, I'VE LIKED YOU FOR A LONG TIME ..
NOOO

WHAT!?
WHAT!?
UWAAHHH

UG EE EH !!
TH... THAT WAS DIRTY, SHISHI-MARU...
THAT WAS CHEATING OW OW OW
UG UH
TEH HEH HEH, I WAS PRAISING YOU.
YOU'RE A MAS-TER...
DON'T PLAY INNOCENT NOW.
YOU SAID IT YOUR-SELF.
HEH HEH HEH, GOEMON, IF FATE DECREES IT, WE'LL MEET AGAIN. BYYEEE

IF YOU MOVE, YOUR GUTS WILL GO FLYING AND YOU'LL DIE
BUT, DON'T COME AFTER ME AGAIN I ONLY LEFT ONE LAYER OF SKIN OVER YOUR STOMACH.
I DON'T KILL MY FRIENDS
YOU WON'T FINISH ME OFF, SHISHIMARU?
YOU'RE SOFT, SHISHI-MARU.
YOU IDIOT! HAVEN'T YOU LEARNED THAT MERCY IS USE-LESS TO A SHINOBI?
OHTOHTO, STOP IT, IDIOT!
UWAAHHH
WELL THEN, SHOULD I FINISH YOU OFF...?
I'LL BEG FOR YOUR FORGIVE-NESS.
OF COURSE, IDIOT!
FIRST TIME I'VE HEARD THAT. REALLY?
IF YOU LET ME LIVE, YOU'LL BE KILLED NEXT TIME.
AH! OYUU.
OYUU!
YOU'RE SO PRE-TENTI-OUS.
AH HA HA, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID ANYTHING, THEN.
YOU LITTLE JERK!

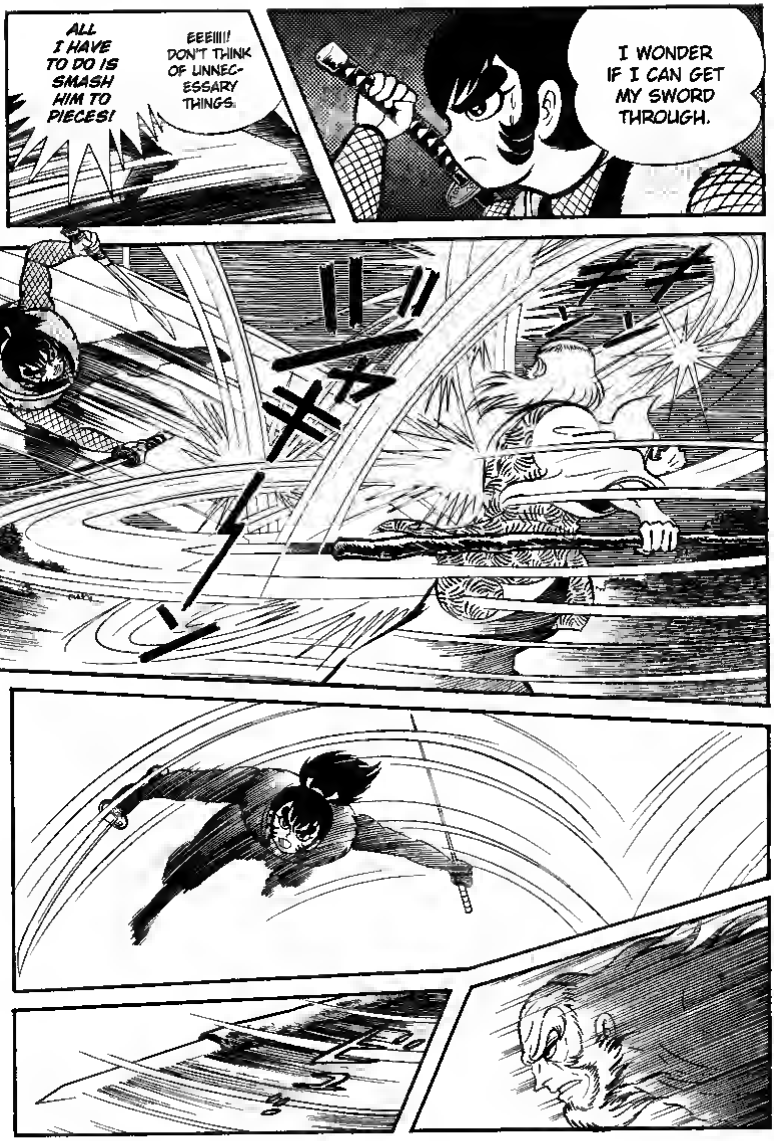
WHEN OYUU IS TIED UP..
YOU BAS-TARD !!
UH! SHISHI-MARU.
HOW IRRITATING. WHAT CAN YOU DO, BRAT!?
UOOHHH
HII!

YES
OYUU, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
YOU WON, SHISHIMARU!? I'M GLAD
IF WE DON'T HURRY...
ALRIGHT, LET'S GO. PUT YOUR KIMONO ON QUICKLY...
!!
HA!
WE'RE SUR-ROUND-ED

IF YOU STOP NOW, I WILL OVERLOOK YOUR ATTEMPT TO LEAVE THE IGA..
HMPH.. MOMOCHI...
AH!
OR DO YOU INTEND TO LEAVE THE IGA AT ANY COST!?

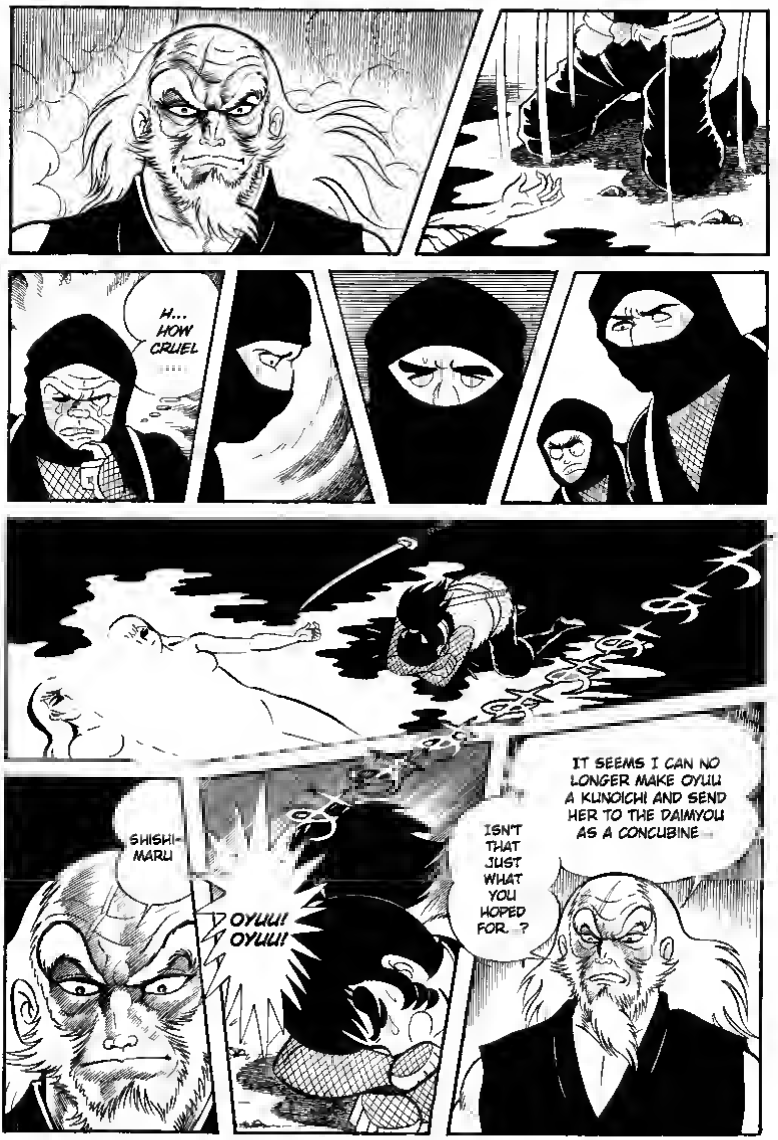
OH HO, SO YOU'LL KILL ME, WILL YOU?
FOR THAT, I'LL EVEN KILL THE CHIEF!!
WE'LL LEAVE! FOR THAT, I EVEN KILLED GRANDPA!
IF YOU WIN...
VERY WELL, SHISHI-MARU. IN THAT CASE, WE WILL DO BATTLE.
YOU MAY DEPART IGA FREELY. NO ONE WILL PURSUE YOU.
YOU AND OYUU MAY GO WHER-EVER YOU PLEASE.
HOW-EVER...
LET'S GO, OLD FOOL!
I DO!
IF I WIN...
YOU WILL BOTH OBEY THE LAWS OF IGA.
DO YOU ACC-EPT IT?

AS EXPECTED OF THE CHIEF, HIS DEFENSE LOOKS FULL OF HOLES, BUT THERE AREN'T ANY.


I WONDER IF I CAN GET MY SWORD THROUGH.
EEEIIII! DON'T THINK OF UNNECESSARY THINGS.
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS SMASH HIM TO PIECES!

I GOT HIM!

OYUUUU!!
O...
OYUU!!
OYUUUUUU!!
うわーっ!!
UOOOHHHH


H... HOW CRUEL ....
IT SEEMS I CAN NO LONGER MAKE OYUU A KUNOICHI AND SEND HER TO THE DAIMYOU AS A CONCUBINE...
ISN'T THAT JUST WHAT YOU HOPED FOR...?
SHISHI-MARU
OYUU! OYUU!

YOUR REASON TO LEAVE THE IGA HAS GONE AS WELL.
WITH THIS...
YOU MUST OBEY THE LAW AND RECIEVE PUNISH-MENT!
NOW,
HOWEVER, TRYING TO LEAVE IS A GRAVE SIN.
YOU, SEAIZE SHISHIMARU AND TAKE HIM AWAY FOR PUNISHMENT!!

OUT OF MY WAY!!
DON'T RESIST, SHISHIMARU IT'S USELESS!
OH!
HOW DARE YOU, MOMOCHI!!
YOU MADE ME KILL OYUU!

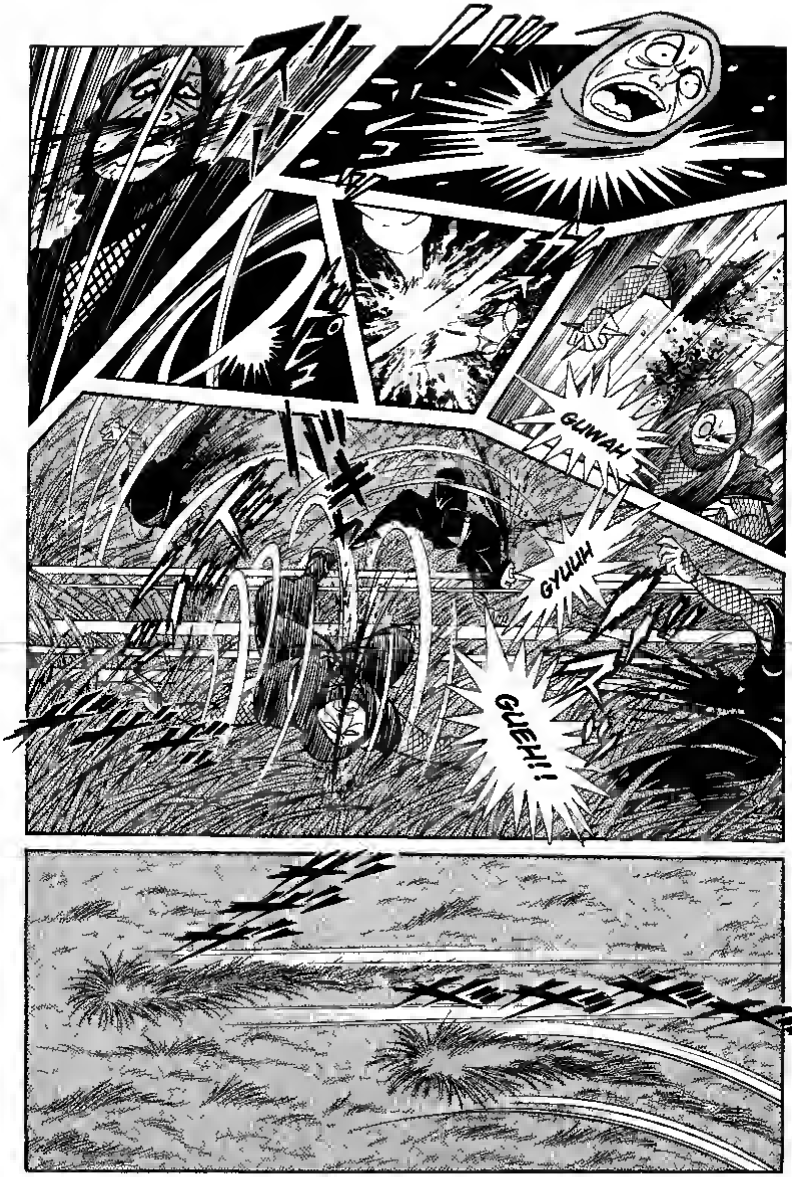
OY-UU!
GIVE OYUU BACK TO ME!!
FOOL!!
BRING OYUU BACK !!

ガ
ドガ
YOU BECAME CAUGHT IN MY BODY DOUBLE TECHNIQUE! YOUR OWN INEXPERI-ENCE IS TO BLAME!
IF YOU'RE TECHNIQUE SURPASSED MINE, OYUU WOULD NOT HAVE DIED!!

UNDER-STAND, SHISHI-MARU!?
IN THIS AGE OF WAR, THE WEAK MUST OBEY THE STRONG!!
IF YOU DON'T LIKE THAT, THEN BECOME STRONG YOUR-SELF!!

YES SIR!
CONFINE SHISHIMARU IN THE PUNISHMENT CELL!
DO YOU UNDERSTAND!?
MAKE HIM UNDERSTAND THE LAW OF THE SHINOBI DOWN TO HIS BONE MARROW!!
MOMOCHI...
YES SIR!
DON'T LET HIM OUT OF THE CELL UNTIL I GIVE THE WORD!
I'LL SHOW YOU I CAN BE STRONGER THAN ANYONE IN IGA!
I WON'T LEAVE THE IGA AGAIN...

AND THEN, SANDAYUU MOMOCHI, I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!!
RE-MEMBER THAT, MOMO-CHI!!
RE-MEM-BER THAT !!
The land of Mino, Kamomi Plain


GUWAH
GYUUH
GUEH!!

HIIII

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ドドドド
ガガガガガガガガ

JINNAI... HOW TERRIFYING
JINNAI, THE NINJA KILLER!
JINNAI THE IMMO-RTAL HAS JOINED WITH DOUSAN...
TERR-IFYING.
IT'S TERRI-FYING!
EVEN .. EVEN KAGEMARU AND JAKI WERE..
YES SIR!
EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE SUCH MASTERS OF TECHNIQUE?
WHAT!? THEY WERE ALL KILLED?

HM-PH.
THAT DEVIL HAS BECOME DOUSAN SAITOU'S BODYGUARD!
IT WAS JINNAI DOUMA.
WHAT DID YOU SAY!?
THERE WAS ONLY ONE ENEMY.
EVERY-ONE HAS ALREADY
JUST WHO CAN POSSIBLY STAND AGAINST THAT MONSTER ..?
HE KNOWS ALL ABOUT SHINOBI TECHNIQUES AND HOW TO COUNTER THEM.
THAT IMMORTAL MONSTER ...?
SHISHI-MARU TENOU!
HUH !?
WHAT DID YOU SAY ...?
THERE IS ONE
WHO IS THAT?
HUH !?
THERE IS ONLY ONE MAN WHO CAN STAND AGAINST THAT MONSTER WITHOUT FEAR.

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ビ
THIS ONE ...

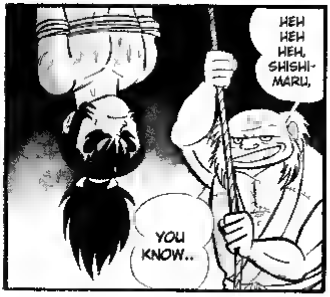
NO, HE MIGHT BE A GENIUS
ARE YOU SERIOUS? SHISHIMARU IS CERTAINLY A SHINOBI OF TERRIFYING SKILL.
SHI-SHI-MA-RU!!
WE WILL HAVE SHISHIMARU FOGHT JINNAI DOUMA!
BUT, HE'S STILL A CHILD.
YURIMARU, COULD YOU DEFEAT SHISHIMARU?
EVEN AMONG THE ADULTS, THERE ARE NO SHINOBI WHO COULD DEFEAT SHISHIMARU.
I COU-LDN'T BEAT HIM.
AH, NO!
THIS WILL BE SHISHI-MARU'S DUTY!
EVEN IF HE IS KILLED, IT DOESN'T MATTER!
IT'S IM-POSSIBLE HE'LL BE KILLED!
HE POSSESSES THE QUALIFI-CATIONS TO BATTLE JINNAI DOUMA!
THAT BEING THE CASE,

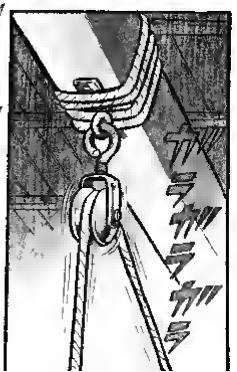
HEH HEH HEH, IF YOUR WHIP ISN'T WORKING...
HE'S TAKING MY WHIP WITHOUT MAKING A SOUND!!

HEE HEE HEE
IT'S A MISTAKE TO THINK OF A BASTARD WHO WOLD RUN AWAY FROM IGA WITH A WOMAN AS A CHILD

IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S HOPING FOR A HARSHER PUNISHMENT
TCH! WHAT'S WITH THIS BRAT?

ISN'T THAT RIGHT, SHISHIMARU...?


HEH HEH HEH, SHISHIMARU,
YOU KNOW..



I SOMETIMES GET CAUGHT UP IN PUNISHMENT AND END UP KILLING PEOPLE
BESIDES, I HAD A SON.
HE LOOKED LIKE ME, SO WOMEN DIDN'T LIKE HIM MUCH
GENJI, WHO YOU KILLED FOR MAKING A PASS AT OYUU, WAS MY SON!
AAH ...
UG-UGU

HM MM
IT MUST BE ABOUT SIX DAYS NOW...
HOW MANY DAYS HAS IT BEEN SINCE SHISHIMARU WAS PLACED IN THE PUNISHMENT CELL?

HM-PH...
I'M SURE HE WON'T BE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO GO AGAINST YOU AGAIN, CHIEF ..
HE'S A STUBBORN ONE, BUT HE'S BEEN GOING EVERY DAY WITH NOTHING BUT WATER.

OH!
AH!
SHISHI-MARU.
WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON HERE ...?

S-SOMEONE LIKE YOU...
GOOD.
SHISHIMARU, I HAVE A JOB FOR YOU.
WILL YOU ACCEPT ?
...
I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD THE NAME JINNAI DOUMA.

THAT'S RIGHT . HE IS ALSO CALLED JINNAI THE IMMORTAL
JINNAI THE NINJA KILLER?
AND HE'S IMMORTAL ...
HE HAS KNOWLEDGE OF NINJA TECHNIQUES, AND HE IS A PEERLESS WARRIOR ..
HE IS WORKING DEFENDING A DAIMYOU FROM NINJA ASSASSINS.
SHISHIMARU, SET OUT FOR MINO AT ONCE! DEFEAT JINNAI DOUMA AND TAKE DOUSAN'S HEAD!!
JINNAI HAS APPEARED IN MINO, FOLLOWING DOUSAN SAITOU!
I'M GOING FOR MY OWN SAKE!
I'M NOT GOING FOR YOU!
HOW-EVER, MOMO-CHI,
I'LL GO!
VERY WELL!

I AM SEEKING FOR OPPONENTS STRONGER THAN MYSELF.
IN ORDER TO MAKE MYSELF STRONGER!
AND WHEN I DO, SANDAYUU MOMOCHI, I'LL KILL YOU!!
AH!

HE HAS GONE BEYOND THE PHYSICAL LIMITS OF THE NINJA.
YOU WOULDN'T THINK HE WAS A MAN WHO HAD BEEN TORTURED FOR SIX DAYS WITH NOTHING TO EAT.
THAT WILL POWER, THOSE MOVEMENTS!
UNBE-LIEVE-ABLE.

BUT HE IS STILL YOUNG...
HE IS BLESSED WITH NATURAL TALENT AS A SHINOBI AND GREAT PHYSICAL STRENGTH.
SHISHIMARU MIGHT BE THE KIND OF GENIUS THAT ONLY COMES ONCE IN A HUN-DRED YEARS...
TENOU IS NOT HIS TRUE NAME.
HOW TERRIFY-ING...
SHISHI-MARU TENOU ...
WHO KNOWS HOW MUCH STRONGER HE WILL GROW.

MO-MOCHI... THEN?
HIS TRUE NAME IS SHISHIMARU MOMOCHI...
SHISHIMARU HAS A REAL NAME EVEN HE DOES NOT KNOW.
HUH!?
MY ONLY GRANDSON.
STRONGER, STRONGER, AND THEN STRONGER STILL...
BECAUSE HE MUST BECOME, STRONG...
WHY IS HE A NINJA OF SUCH LOW RANK?
THEN, THE DECEASED PRINCESS SAYO...
HE WILL MOST LIKELY BE A FOE FAR MORE TERRIFYING THAN JINNAI.
ONE DAY, SHISHIMARU MUST FACE A TERRIBLE FOE.

A HORRIFYING DEMON KING...
THAT ENEMY IS A MAN, AND YET NOT A MAN.

Once a mere layabout, he grew successful, exiled his master Yorinari Toki and took control of the land of Mino. He is called "the pit viper" by those who dissaproves of his methods.
The lord of Mino, Dousan Saitou
MINO
IGA

Yoshi-
tatsu
Saitou
In the first year of Kouji (1555 A.D.), Dousan's eldest son Yoshitatsu assassinated his two younger brothers in Inabayama Castle and raised the standard of rebellion.

When Dousan, in his manor below Inabayama Castle, learned that Yoshitatsu was in revolt, he promptly retreated into the mountains of Mino and gathered his troops at Sagiyama Castle.

UH!
WAH !!

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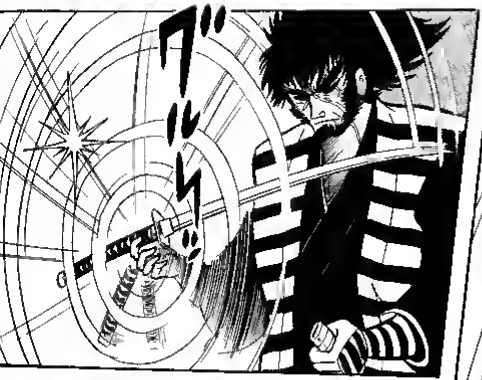
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ビュン

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サクサク
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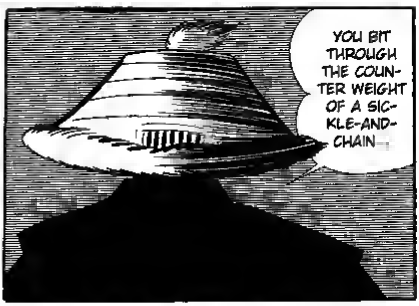
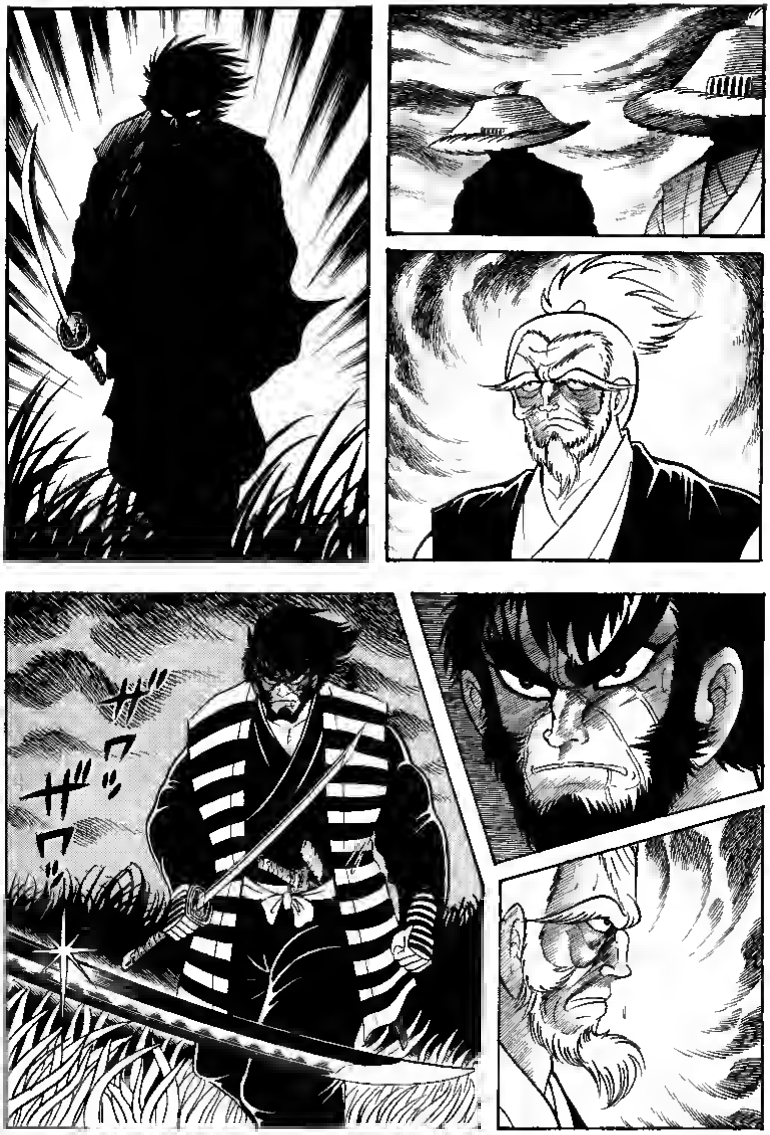
HEH HEH HEH, IT SEEMS THERE IS A TERRIFYING MAN IN THIS WORLD.

AND YOU ARE...?


YOU BIT THROUGH THE COUNTER WEIGHT OF A SICKLE-AND-CHAIN...

I AM CALLED BOKUDEN TSUKAHARA.

The master swordsman Bokuden Tsukahara. He was so great a swordsmen that there was not a single person throughout Japan who did not know his name. He was victorious in ten duels and ran across thirteen battlefields. He cut down more than two hundred foes. Throughout all of that, it is said that he himself recieved not even a single sword wound...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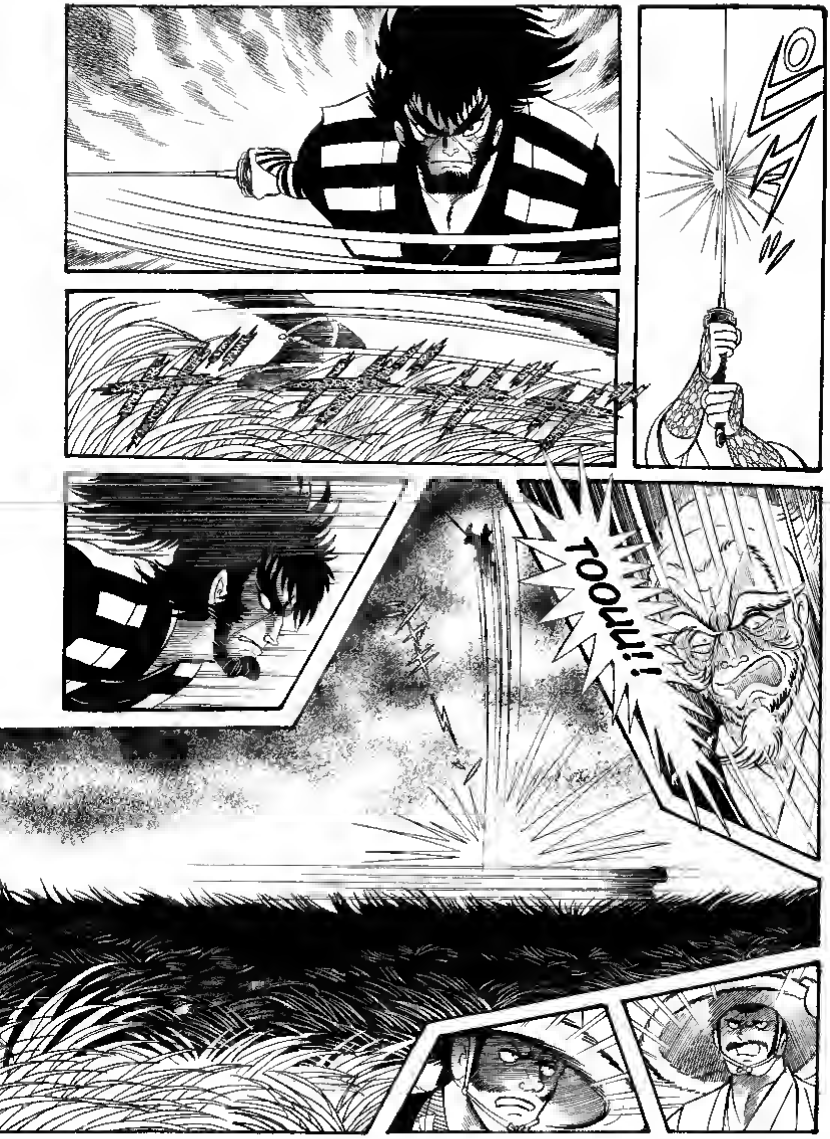
HEH HEH HEH
I'LL TRY TO CUT ALONG THE SCARS YOU ALREADY HAVE...
IT WOULD BE A PITY TO ADD ANOTHER WOUND TO THAT SCAR-COVERED FACE.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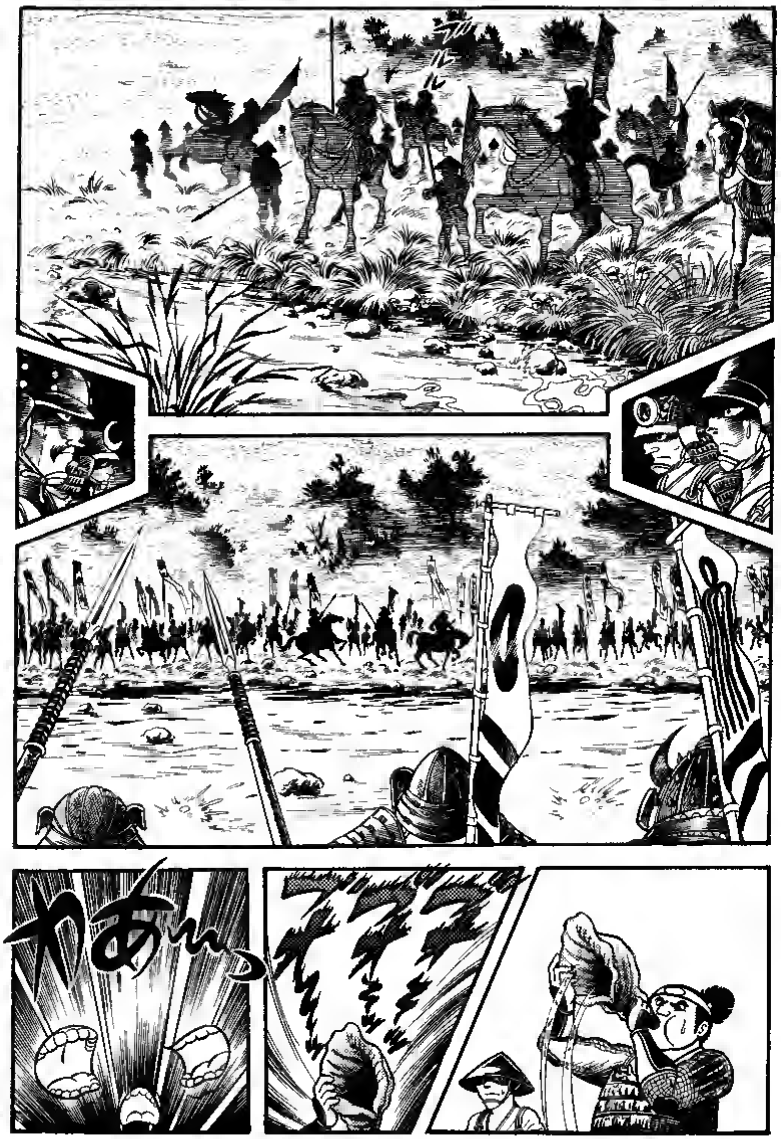
HOH
FW-
HAH
HAH
HAH
HA

HEH HEH HEH...
THAT WAS SPLENDID, MASTER!
AH-WAWA...
M.. MASTER.
WHAT'S WRONG, YOU TWO...?
HM?
DID YOU SEE IT CLEARLY...? THE SWORDSMANSHIP JUST NOW?
HM!?
TH... THIS IS...
OH!

HEH HEH HEH
BOKUDEN TSUKAHARA, YOUR SKILL IS AS GREAT AS THE RUMORS CLAIM.
I WAS UNABLE... TO COUNTER YOUR SWORD!
HEH HEH HEH...

IS QUITE A BOTHER ...
PUTTING MY BODY BACK TOGETHER ONCE IT'S CUT UP...
MMM-PH...
YOU... YOU ARE...?
THERE AREN'T ANY GAPS, ARE THERE...?
HOW IS IT? IS IT ATTACHED PROPERLY ...?

THE TECHNIQUES OF THE BOKUDEN STYLE ARE SPLENDID INDEED!
THEY ARE SPLENDID... HOWEVER...
THIS TIME, YOU'LL HAVE TO WORK OUT A WAY TO CUT DOWN A DEATHLESS MAN...
IF YOU CAN'T..
YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO DEFEAT JINNAI DOUMA...
HEH HEH HEH
HAH HAH HAH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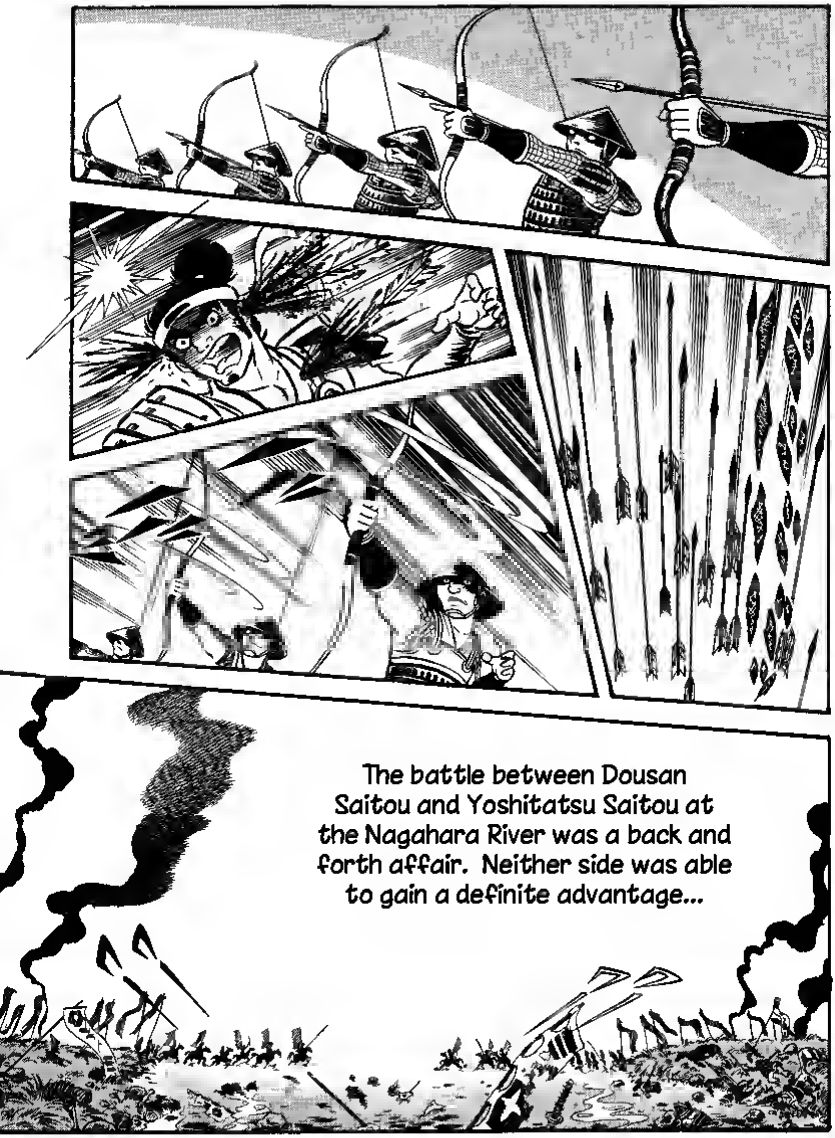
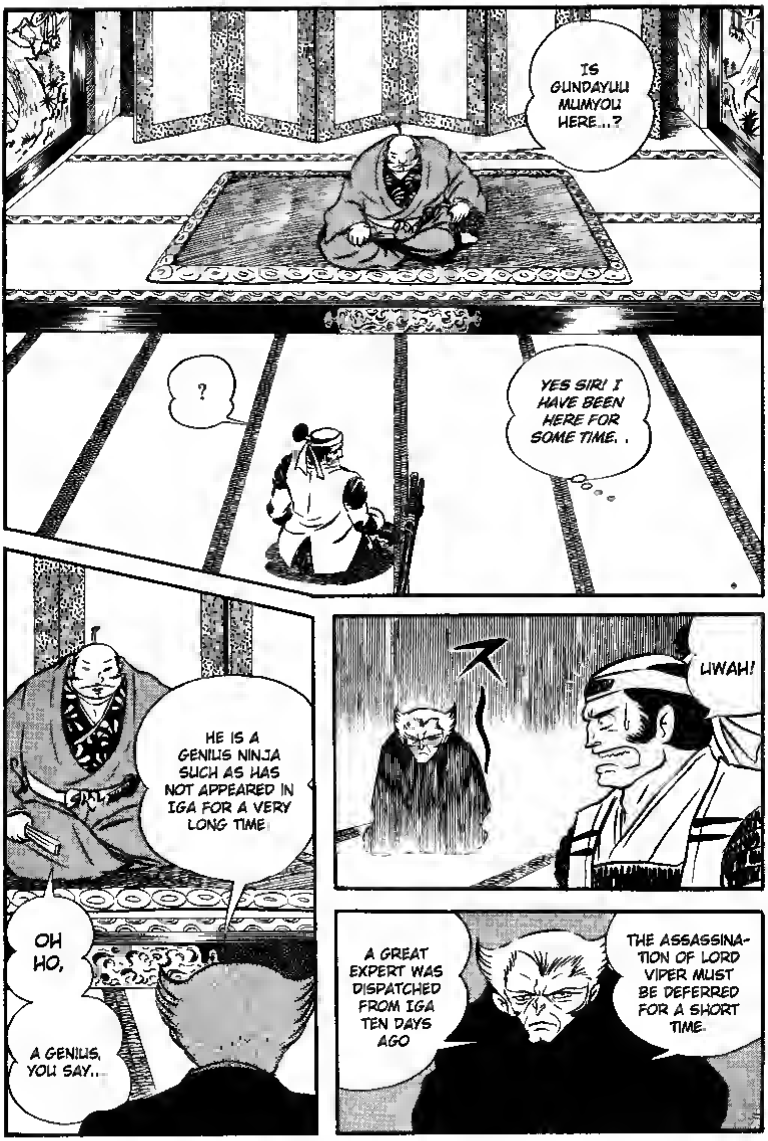
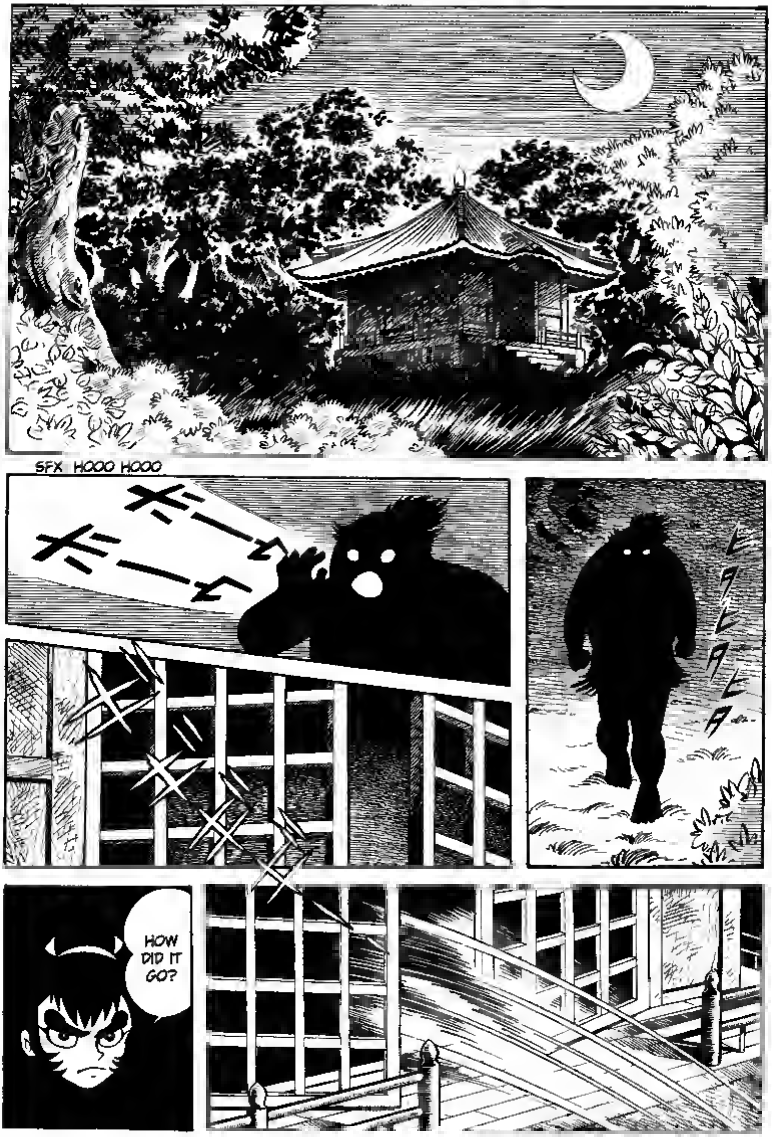

The battle between Dousan Saitou and Yoshitatsu Saitou at the Nagahara River was a back and forth affair. Neither side was able to gain a definite advantage...

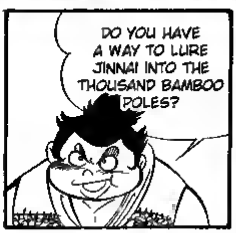
WE CANNOT GRASP VICTORY NOW...
THE ENEMY HAVE NOT COMPLETELY LOST THERE STRENGTH
Inabayama Castle
AS EXPECTED OF MY OLD MAN...
HMPH...
IF THIS BATTLE IS NOT BROUGHT TO A CLOSE SOON...
OWARI WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR SITUATION...
Yoshitatsu Saitou
HE IS ALSO AN ACCOMPLISHED STATEGIST.
HE ISN'T JUST FEARED AS THE "VIPER".
YES SIR!
I WANT TO PUT AN END TO THIS BEFORE HE MAKES HIS MOVE
HE MAY BE AN IDLER, BUT HE MUST NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED...
THE SON IN LAW OF THE LORD OF OWARI IS GREAT SIMPLETON CALLED NOBUNAGA ODA

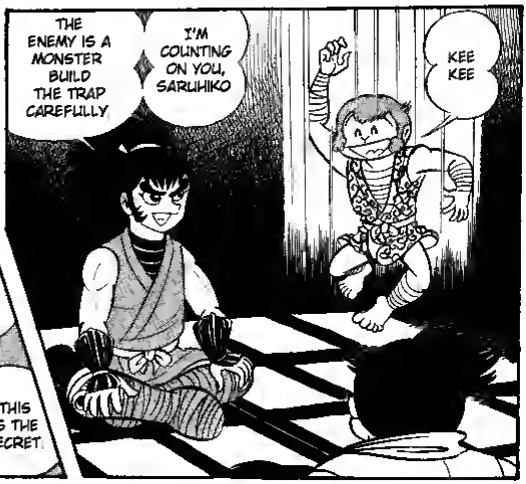

IS GUNDAYUU MUMYOU HERE...?
?
YES SIR! I HAVE BEEN HERE FOR SOME TIME. .
HE IS A GENIUS NINJA SUCH AS HAS NOT APPEARED IN IGA FOR A VERY LONG TIME.
OH HO,
A GENIUS, YOU SAY...
UWAH!
A GREAT EXPERT WAS DISPATCHED FROM IGA TEN DAYS AGO
THE ASSASSINATION OF LORD VIPER MUST BE DEFERRED FOR A SHORT TIME.


SFX HOOO HOOO
HOW DID IT GO?

SABUROUTA OF THE RIDGE LET ME KNOW THAT HE PATROLS AROUND SAGI-YAMA CASTLE.
I LEARNED JINNAI'S DAILY MOVEMENTS...
WELL, IT WENT GREAT.
I SEE...
THANKS!
HOWEVER, HE LEAVES THE CASTLE ONCE EVERY FOUR DAYS..
HE SLEEPS DURING THE DAY... BUT HE STAYS CLOSE SO THAT DOUSAN'S VOICE CAN REACH HIM EASILY.
JINNAI DOUMA IS ALMOST ALWAYS CLOSE AT DOUSAN'S SIDE, DAY OR NIGHT.
IF YOU WANT TO LAY A TRAP, THAT'S THE TIME.
IT SEEMS HE PATROLS THE SURROUNDING TERRITORY
FROM EARLY MORNING UNTIL NOON...
OH HO.
IS THERE ANYWHERE ALONG JINNAI'S ROUTE I CAN SET UP THE THOUSAND BAMBOO POLES, YAKICHI?
ALRIGHT, I'LL BURY JINNAI WITH THE SHISHIMARU-NINPOU THOUSAND BAMBOO BATTLE FORMATION!

I SEE. WELL THEN, LET'S GO THERE. WE'LL PREPARE THE TRAP WITH SARUHIKO.
THAT PLACE IS IDEAL FOR THE THOUSAND BAMBOO POLES.
THERE'S A PERFECT SPOT: ONIBIGAHARA.
SARU-HIKO.

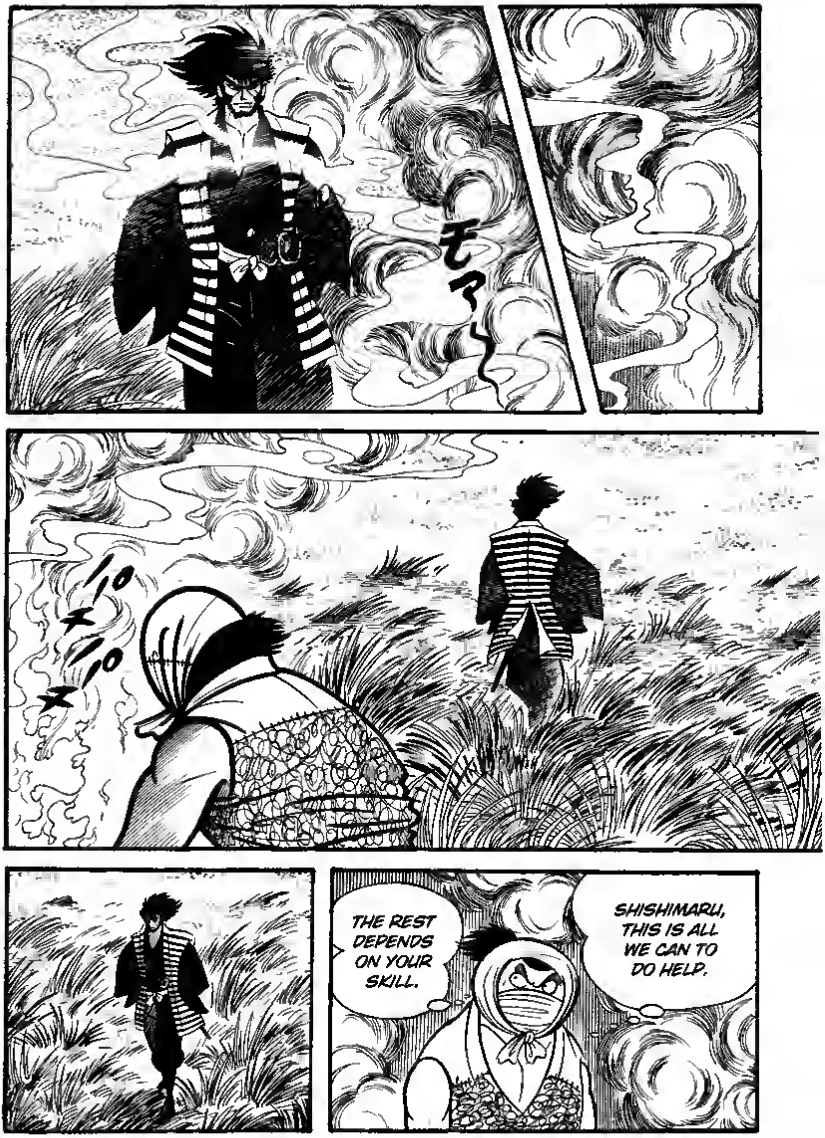




Dried hemp leaves. In other words: Marijuana.

YEAH.. I'LL GET HIM, JUST YOU WATCH
I'LL SHOW YOU THE STRENGTH OF THE SHISHIMARU-NINPOU!
OO KEE KEE, DO YOUR BEST, SHISHIMARU..
GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT, SHISHIMARU!
HE'S AN INTERESTING ONE... WITH HIM, WE CAN WIN.....
NO MISTAKE.
THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW, SHISHIMARU.
HMM.
WHEN'S THE NEXT TIME JINNAI GOES OUTSIDE?

BURN-
ING THE
FIELDS,
I SEE...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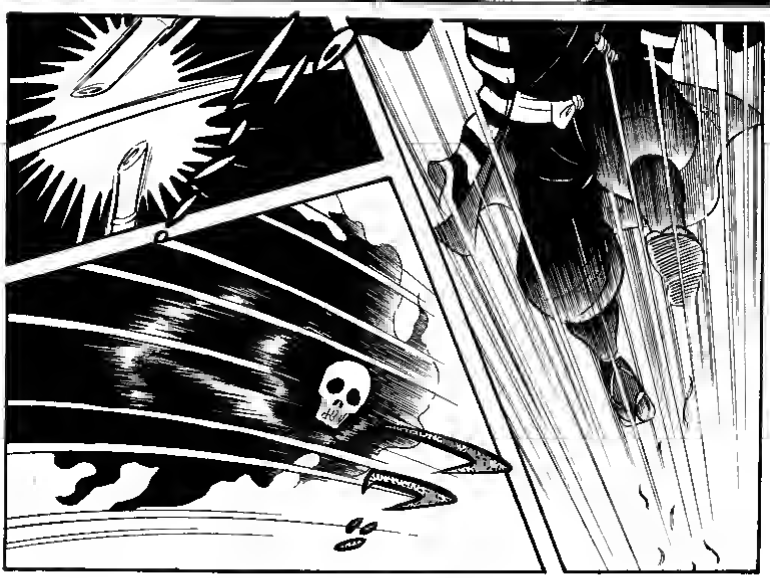
SHISHIMARU, THIS IS ALL WE CAN TO DO HELP.
THE REST DEPENDS ON YOUR SKILL.

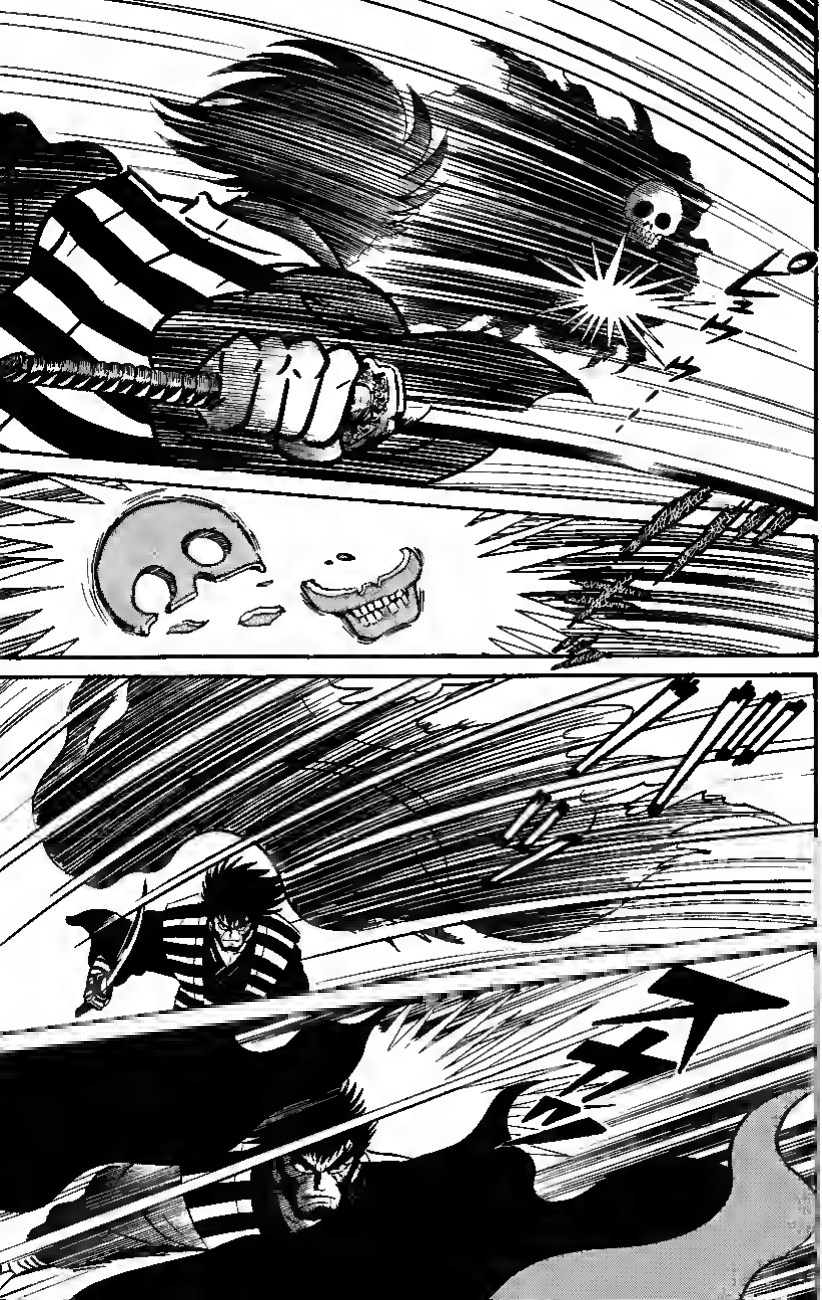
(SIGN): JINNAI DOUMA DIES HERE
I'M IMMORTAL TOO, BECAUSE I'M A SCARECROW
HEH HEH HEH, JINNAI DOUMA, THEY SAY YOU'RE IMMORTAL.
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR PLACE.
HEH HEH, A SHINOBI?
CAN AN IMMORTAL DEFEAT ANOTHER IMMORTAL!?

TCH!

THERE!!
THE GOD OF DEATH HAS ARRIVED.
JINNAI THE IMMORTAL, I WILL GRANT YOU THE PEACE OF DEATH.
FOR THAT PURPOSE, I HAVE COME HERE FROM HELL.
WHAT!?
HEH HEH...

I'LL TEACH YOU A LESSON!! YOU NEED TO LEARN YOUR PLACE!
SHINOBI, DO YOU MEAN TO MOCK JINNAI DOUMA FROM YOUR SOCIAL POSITION!?

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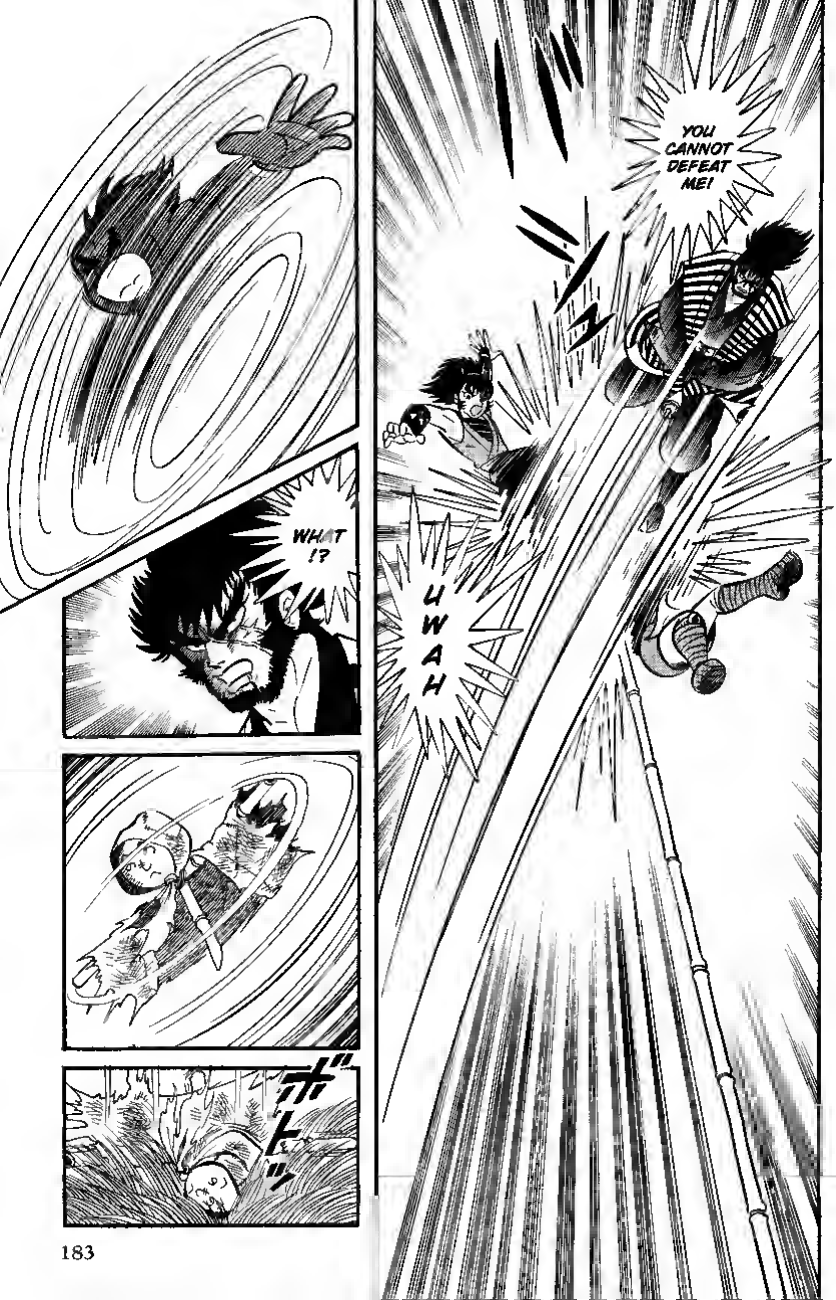
SO, YOU'RE FROM IGA!?
AH HAH HA, AS EXPECTED OF JINNAI, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU KNOW HOW TO FIGHT.

A NINJA OF IGA'S MOMOCHI FORTRESS: SHISHI-MARU!
JINNAI DOUMA THE NINJA-KILLER, I'VE COME FROM IGA TO CHALLENGE YOU!
IN OTHER WORDS,
I'M GOING TO KILL THE NINJA-KILLER. AH HAH HAH

NOW THAT I SEE YOU, IT SEEMS YOU'RE STILL A CHILD.
JINNAI DOUMA, THIS IS THE PLACE YOU'RE GOING TO DIE!!
I WON'T FORGIVE THOSE WHO STAND IN MY WAY, EVEN IF THEY ARE CHILDREN!
HOW-EVER,

I THOUGHT YOU WERE ALL TALK... BUT IT SEEMS YOU CAN DO A LITTLE...
HEH HEH HEH, YOU'RE QUITE SKILLFUL
HOW-EVER!


YOU CANNOT DEFEAT ME!
UWAH
WHAT !?
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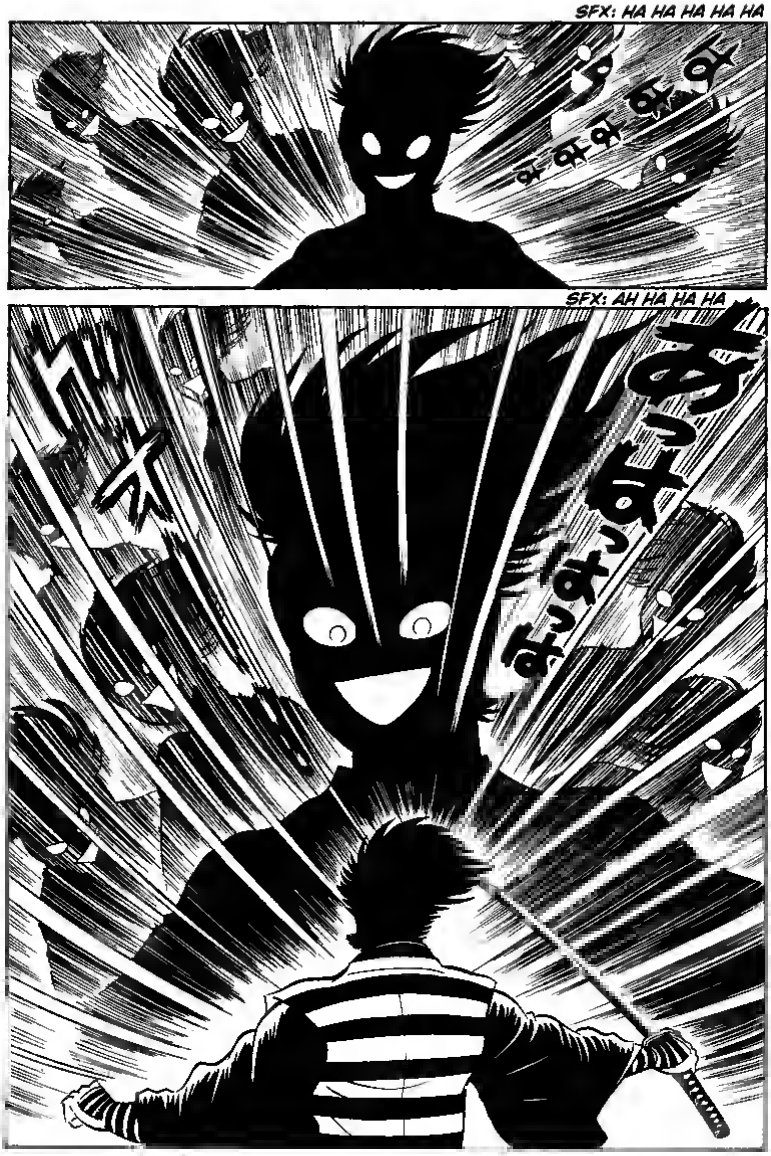
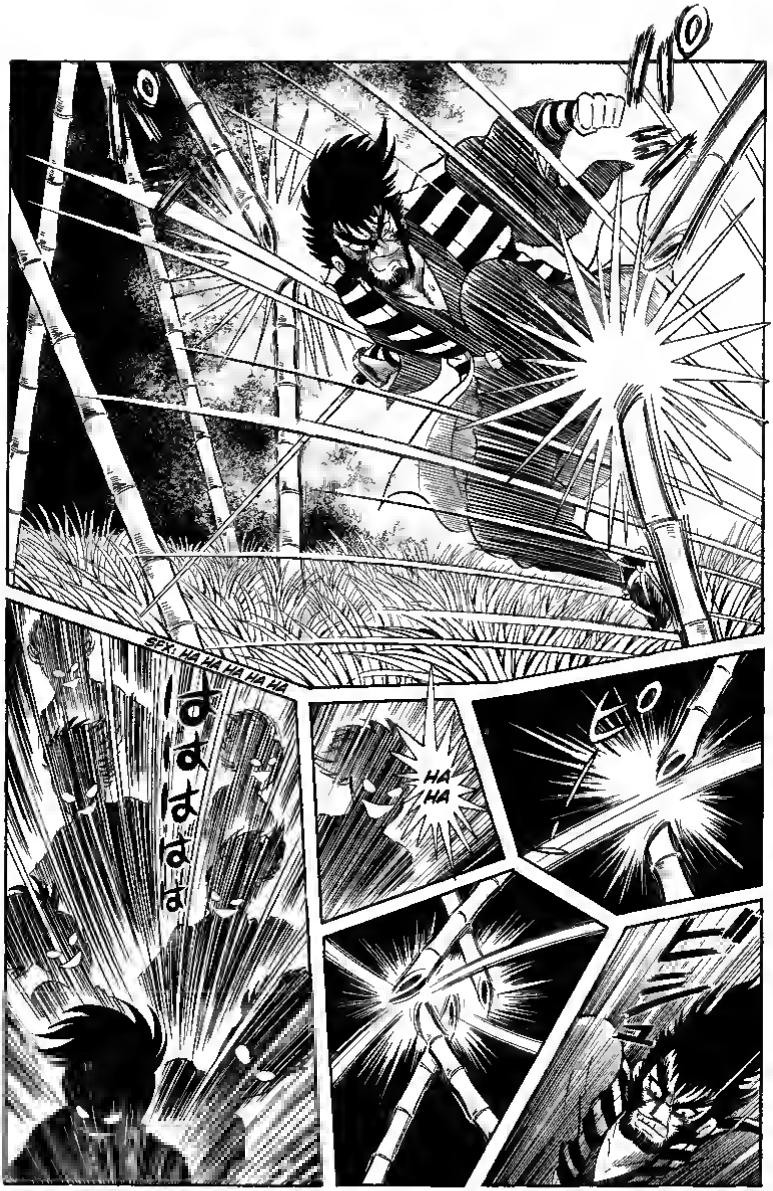
YOU ARE ALREADY CAUGHT IN MY TECHNIQUE!
HEH HEH HEH
IMPOSSIBLE, I'M SURE I CUT HIM.
A DUMMY ?
SHAH
MY REAL BODY IS RIGHT HERE!!
THAT'S AN ILLUSION, JINNAI!!

I'M OVER HERE !!
JINNAI, THAT'S AN ILLUSION TOO!
WHERE ARE YOU SWINGING THAT SWORD, JINNAI?
JIN-NAI.
OVER HERE, JIN-NAI.
HEH HEH HEH
JINNAI, I WON'T DIE NO MATTER HOW MANY PHANTOMS YOU CUT DOWN.


SFX: HA HA HA HA HA
SFX: AH HA HA HA

UWAAHHHH!!
UWAAAAHH
JINNAI...
JIN-NAI!

JIN-NAI.
JINNAI!!
JI-NN-AI!!
JIN-NAI !!
JIN-NAI !!
JINNAI!!
.....
I'LL CUT THROUGH EVERY LAST ONE.
WOOHHH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SFX: HA HA HA HA HA
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HA HA
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SFX: UOOHHH
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UU OO OO HH HH !!

WAAAHHHH

HM?

TH-
THIS
IS...

OIL!!

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SHISHI-MARU-NINPOU: FORMATION OF THE THOUSAND BAMBOO POLES. NO ONE CAN GET OUT OF THIS ALIVE!
JINNAI! THIS IS WHERE YOU DIE.
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UWAAAAHH
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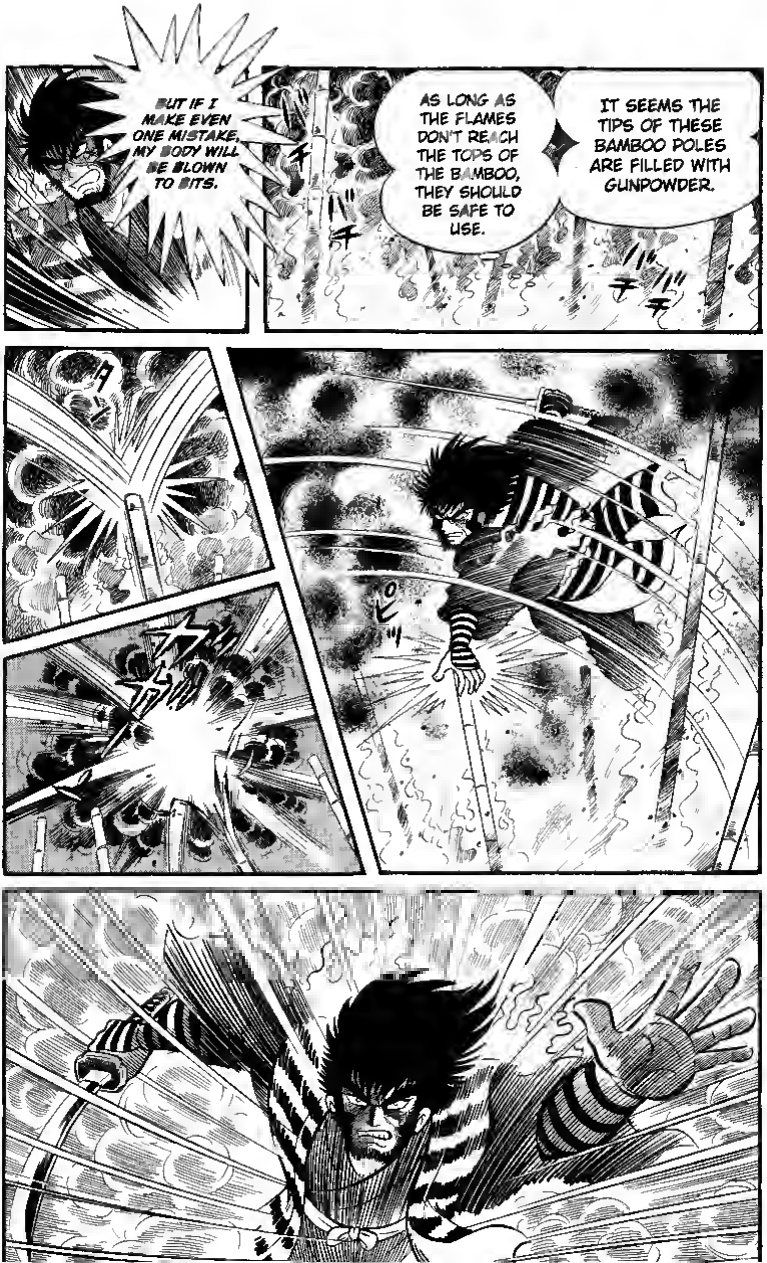
GOHO
GOHO
GOHO
GOHO
I CAN'T TELL WHERE I'M GOING SURROUNDED BY THIS SMOKE.
SHIT !!
DO YOU THINK THIS IS ENOUGH TO FINISH ME!?
UWAH!

GUOOOHH
UW AH

YUP.
LOOKS LIKE YOU GOT HIM, SHISHIMARU!
NO MATTER HOW IMMORTAL THEY SAY HE IS, EVEN JINNAI
SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO MOVE IN A FIRE LIKE THIS.
HEH HEH HEH

CALM DOWN CALM YOUR-SELF!
IF I KEEP ON LIKE THIS, ALL I CAN DO IS BURN TO DEATH.
BECOME SERENE AND COOL.


BUT IF I MAKE EVEN ONE MISTAKE, MY BODY WILL BE BLOWN TO BITS.
AS LONG AS THE FLAMES DON'T REACH THE TOPS OF THE BAMBOO, THEY SHOULD BE SAFE TO USE.
IT SEEMS THE TIPS OF THESE BAMBOO POLES ARE FILLED WITH GUNPOWDER.

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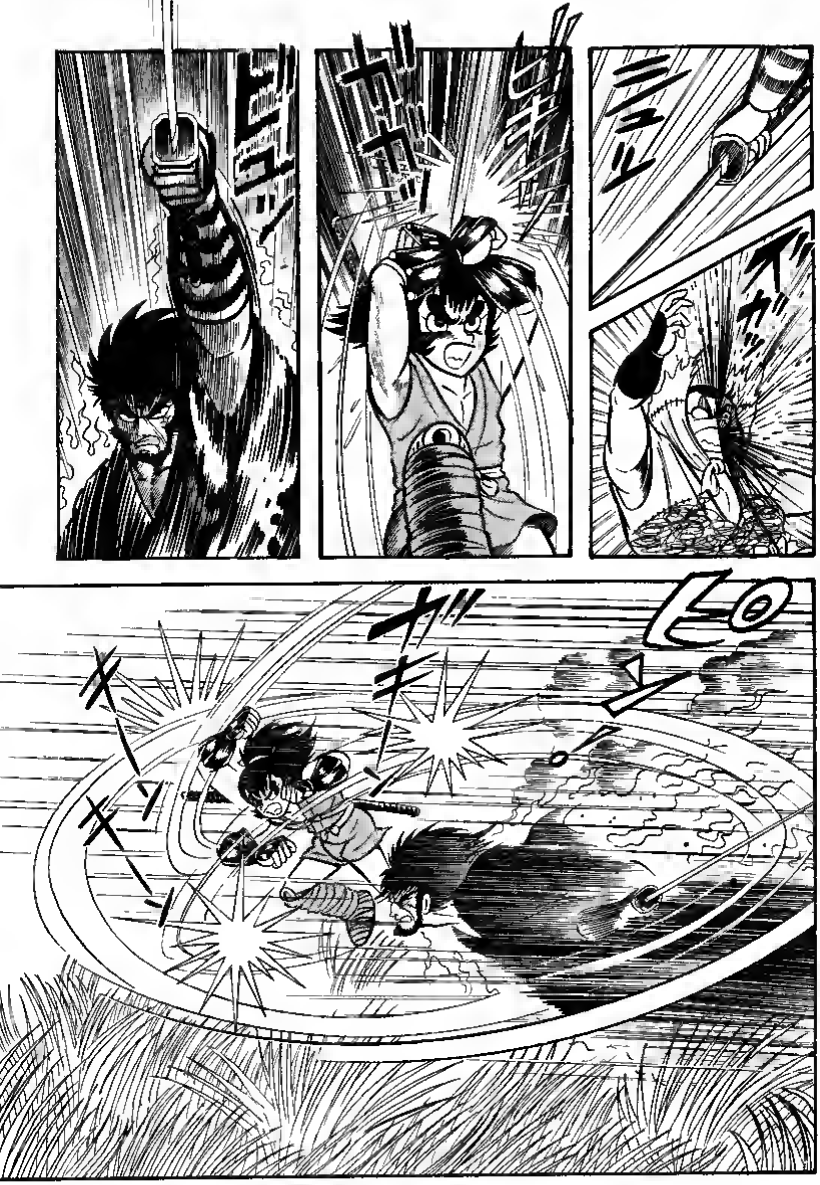
HEH HEH.. I WOULDN'T WANT TO GET BURNED BY MY OWN TECHNIQUE...
THE WIND'S CHANGED DIRECTION.
WE SHOULD FALL BACK.
IT LOOKS LIKE EVEN THE NINJA-KILLER CAN'T BREAK OUT OF THE FORMATION OF THE THOUSAND BAMBOO POLES
AFTER THIS RAGING FIRE AND THE EXPLOSIONS, THERE'S NO WAY JINNAI IS STILL ALIVE.
C-COULD IT BE!?
SOME-THING'S COMING OUT OF THE FLAMES!
OH!

I'VE DE-
FEATED THE
FORMATION
OF THE
THOUSAND
BAMBOO
POLES!!
SFX: UWAAAHH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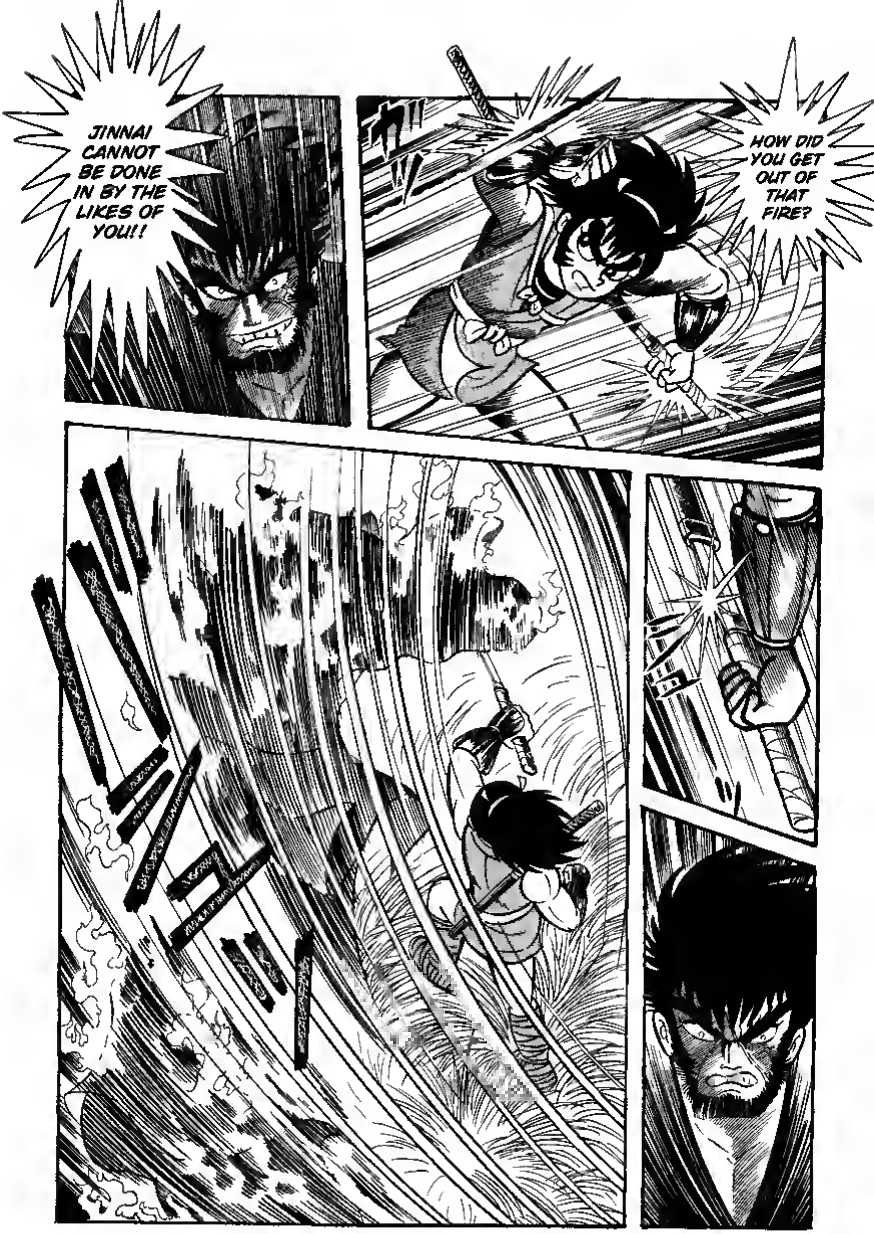
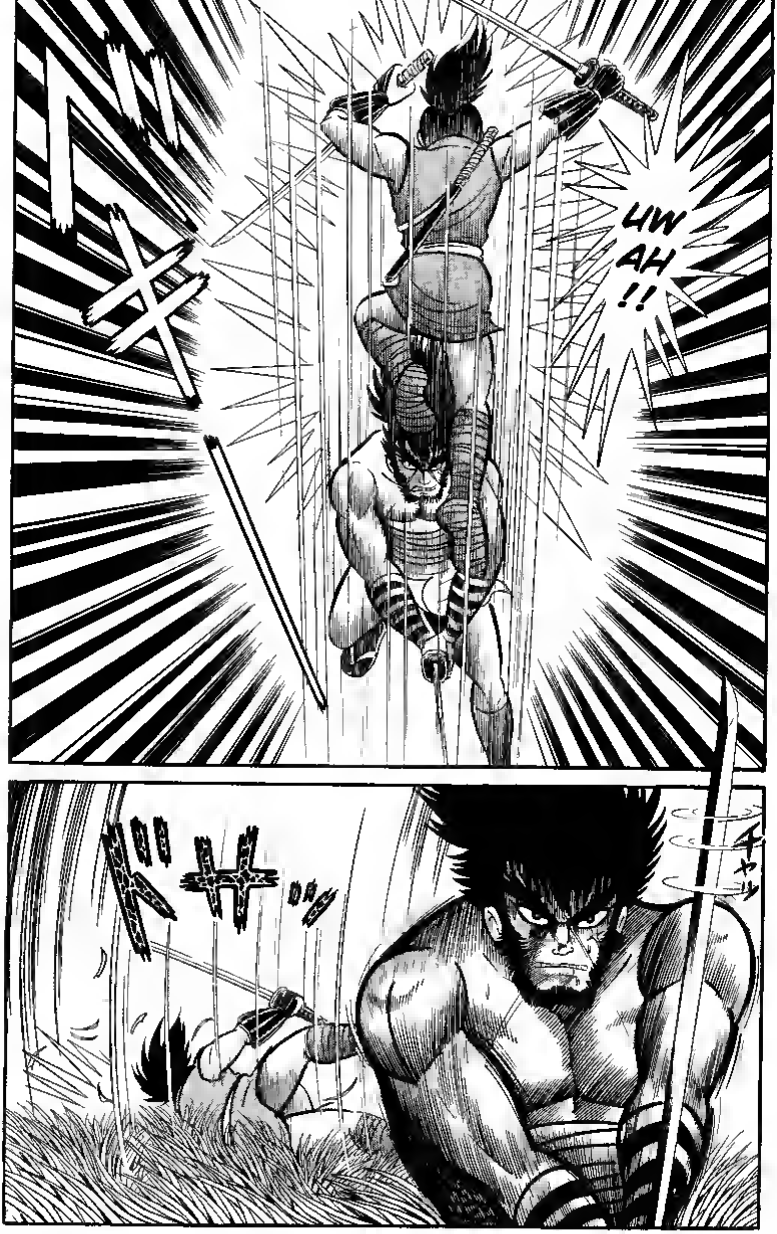

JINNAI CANNOT BE DONE IN BY THE LIKES OF YOU!!
HOW DID YOU GET OUT OF THAT FIRE?

AH
WA HA HA HA
!!


UWAH!!
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HEH
HEH
HEH
FUAH HA HA HA HA HA

UGU ...
UH ...
I... I CAN'T MOVE MY BODY.

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UWAAAHHHH
IT'S ALRIGHT EVERY-THING'S FINE, SHISHIMARU
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE COME TO... SHISHI-MARU
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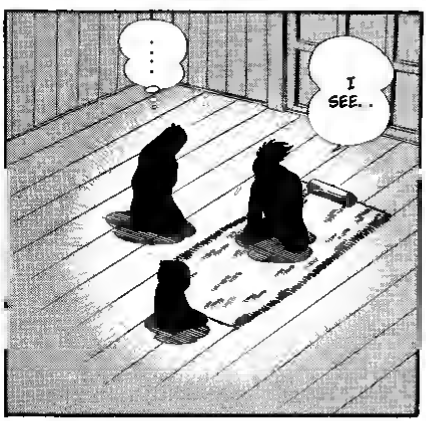
YOU JUST PASSED OUT FROM BEING STRUCK WITH THE BACK OF HIS SWORD
YOU WEREN'T CUT.
WAS I...
SAVED ...?

YOU WERE CRYING OUT A LOT IN YOUR SLEEP
THAT WAS A DREAM JUST NOW ...?
THEN...


.....
I SEE..

THAT'S RIGHT, YAKICHI. WHAT HAPPENED TO YAKICHI!?

HE DIED...

YEAH...
YOU LOST ...?
HE MAY REALLY BE IMMORTAL, AS THE RUMORS SAY...
THAT'S RIGHT... HE BROKE THROUGH MY FORMATION OF THE THOUSAND BAMBOO POLES ..
HE ESCAPED FROM WITHIN THOSE FLAMES.
TO JINNAI DOUMA?

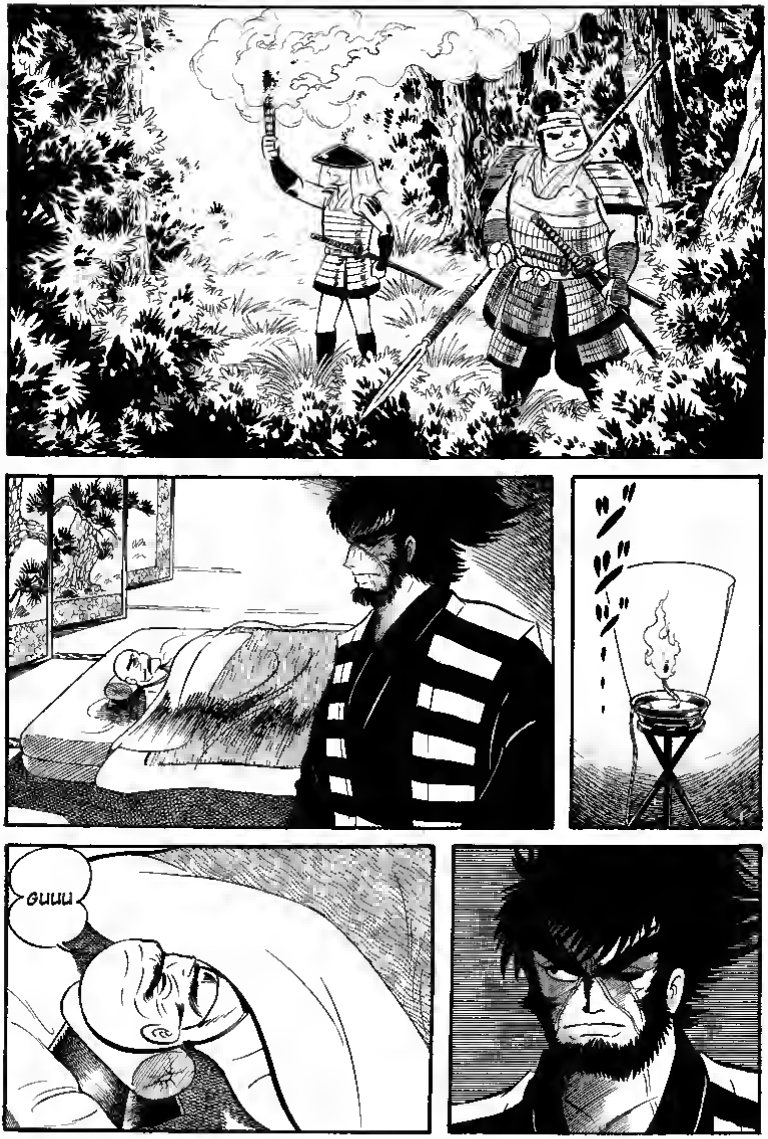
IT WOULD HAVE AT LEAST BROKEN TWO OR THREE RIBS!
IF I HADN'T BEEN WEARING ARMOR, IT WOULD HAVE DONE MORE THAN JUST KNOCK ME OUT
BUT IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE STRIKE
HE HIT ME WITH THE BACK OF HIS SWORD...
THEN WHY ARE YOU ALIVE?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
WHAT!?
HOW STRANGE. WAS THE ONE YOU FOUGHT TRULY JINNAI..?
HE WOULD NEVER SPARE YOUR LIFE...
HE'S A HOMICIDAL MANIAC. KILLING POWERFUL SHINOBI IS JINNAI'S REASON FOR LIVING...
JINNAI WOULD NEVER ALLOW A NINJA TO LIVE.

IT'S STRANGE. IT'S UNTHINKABLE THAT JINNAI WOULD DO SUCH A THING..
NO! I WONDER WHY...
CAN'T YOU THINK OF ANYTHING?
SHISHIMARU, WHAT WAS HIS REASON FOR NOT KILLING YOU?
THE MAN HIMSELF, OF COURSE
GO AND ASK? ASK WHO?
HUH!?
ALRIGHT! IN THAT CASE, I'LL GO AND ASK
IS IT REALLY SO MYSTERIOUS?
I'M GOING THERE TO MEET JINNAI DOUMA!
SNEAK INTO SAGIYAMA CASTLE!
IT'S ABOUT HIS OWN MIND, AFTER ALL!
THERE'S NOTHIN I CAN DO BUT ASK JINNAI DOUMA HIMSELF!
I'M GOING TO...
WHA... WHAT DID YOU SAY...?

THAT'S TOO RECKLESS! IF THERE'S SOME KIND OF TRAP, YOU'LL DIE A DOG'S DEATH!
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT THAT IS!
THERE MUST BE SOME REASON HE DIDN'T KILL ME WHEN HE HAD THE CHANCE.
I'LL DEAL WITH THAT WHEN IT HAPPENS.

IT EVEN HAS THE NUMBER OF GUARDS WRITTEN DOWN.
THIS IS A ROUGH SKETCH OF SAGIYAMA CASTLE.
WITH THIS, SNEAKING INSIDE SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM.
THANKS FOR THIS
IT WAS SENT BY SABUROUTA OF THE RIDGE, WHO'S CONCEALED INSIDE THE CASTLE...
THERE'S ALSO A MESSAGE FROM SABUROUTA.
I FEEL LIKE I MIGHT EVEN BE able TO TAKE DOUSAN'S HEAD!
IF HE MEETS YOU INSIDE THE CASTLE, HE'LL HAVE TO CUT YOU DOWN.
IF YOU KILL HIM, THINKING HE'S AN ENEMY...
WAS ABLE TO BECOME DOUSAN'S RETAINER, SO...
SABUROUTA

DON'T DIE LIKE A DOG, SHISHIMARU!


GUUU

IF HE APPEARS, EVERYTHING WILL BE JUST AS I WANT...

I HAVE A FEELING HE'LL COME SOMETIME TONIGHT—
THAT CHILD CALLED SHISHI-MARU